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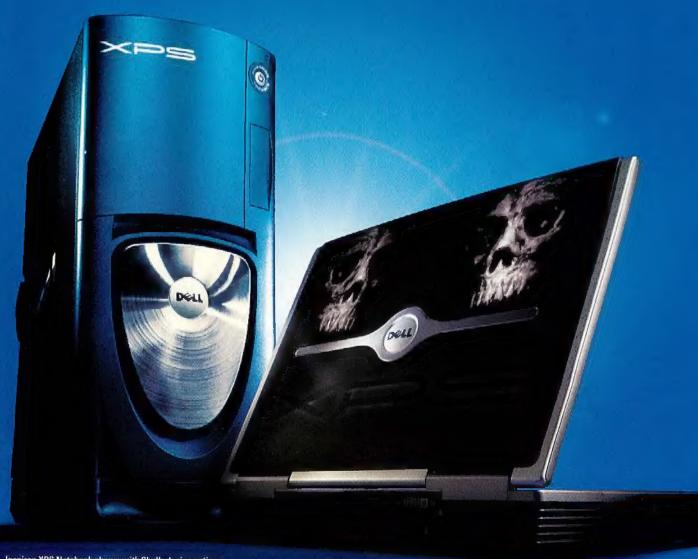
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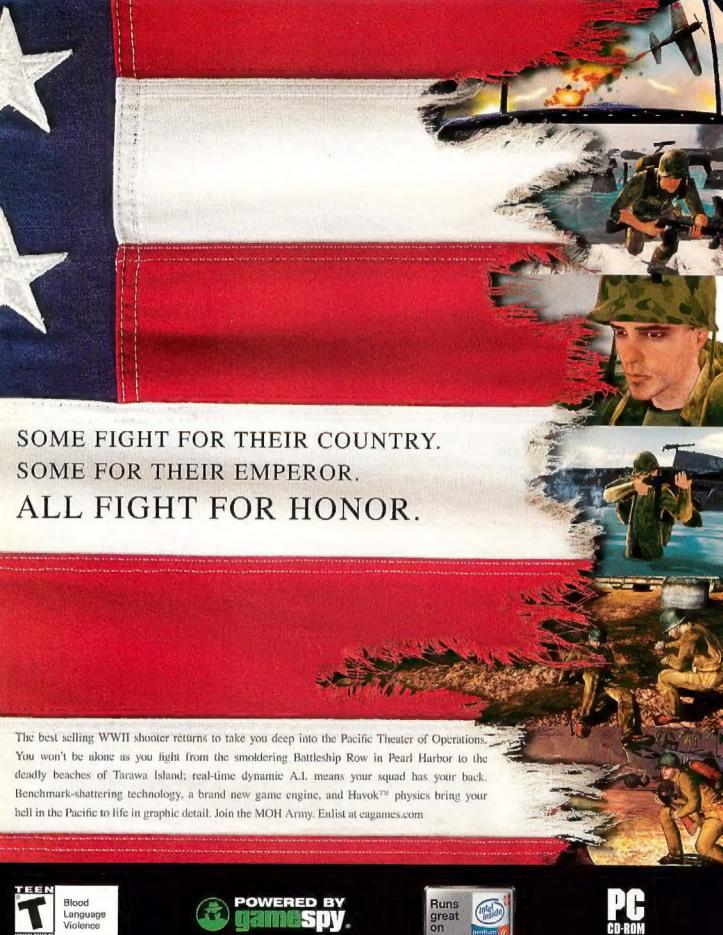
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"Why I may never play Battlefield 1942 again"

PC GAMER, March 2004

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Editor-in-Ch of Joff Green was not the "first person on the planet" to play Doom 3 Just the oldest.

#### 20 Letters

What exactly is a hippogryph, anyway? We sure as hell don't know, but that's OK-our trusty readers apparently dol

#### 26 Radar

Ever the trusty newshound, Darren's got plenty of new scoops for you this month. Take a look at the wide world of EA Sports. a real-life game of Pac-Man, the military's stance on army-themed games, and a new pinball table emulator called PINMAME.

#### 46 Previews

Hot off the shelf: City of Heroes, Issue #21 Read up on the expansion, with early information on the villainous sequel. Then see what American McGee has been up to with Scrapland. Plus, check out our hands-on looks at Call of Duty: United Offensive and Star Wars Galaxies: Jump to Lightspeed.

#### 70 Reviews

The year's big releases are finally here, and we've got 'em! That's right, Virtual Skipper 3 is reviewed in this very issue! Oh, and Doom 3, too. We've also got the goods on Ground Control II, Doom 3, TrackMania, Doom 3, Missing, and Doom 3. And did we mention Doom 3?

#### 93 Tech

You want sexy? You got it. This month, we take a look at some of the coolest and fastest stuff around: PCI Express and Voodoo's "Silent System," There's also a new Cracked Case. How To, and Wil Power.

#### **109** Check Out

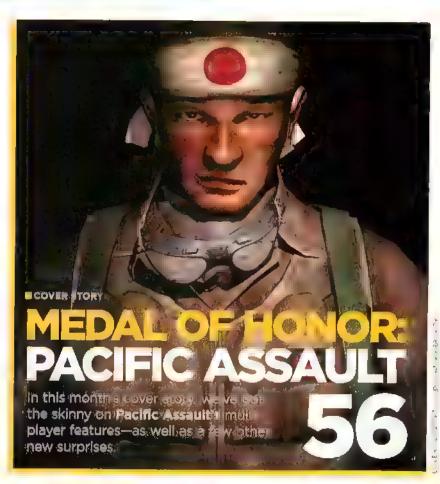
We've given our Check Out section a fresh coat of paint-and we think you'll all dig the new Fast Forward section and IUPcom community pages, as well as the retooled A-List and the glorious return of Killer Rig!

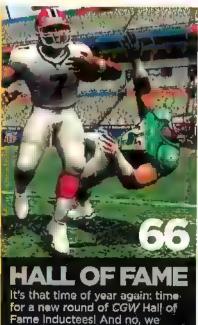
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#### **124** Scorched Earth

No man is an island, but Robert isn't quite human, so it's OK that he's so isolated We re all better off for it





didn't induct Will Wright again:









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Which games are trianing up the charts on our official website? To no one's surprise, the most popular games of the moment are Tho



Sims 2, Half-Life 2, and Doom 3: There's also an up-to-the-minute garning news feed, gameplay tips on everything from Silent Storm to Final Fantasy XI, and timely release dates for everything you're looking... forward to playing,

#### CGW-RYANJUP.COM

Ryan Scott likes Akira Kurosawa movies, comic books, and pictures of the Punisher punching polar bears in the face. And he hates that annoying Fanta soda theme song. You know,



the one that they play in the theater before every movie. His blog is a random assortment of almiess thoughts, and his game collection is ... well, it's so big that it won't even fit. Or maybe he's just too damn lazy to tally up his 9-year collection of floppy disks and Intellivision cartridges

#### BOARDS.TUP.COM/

As usual, our CGW Game Discussion and Magazine Comments message. boards are laden with the same sorts of criticisms, comments, and undecipherable drivel that you find on pretty much every internet message board. Except ours is peppared with executive editor Robert Coffey's trademark insanity and reelancer Arcadian Del Sol's trademark bitter anger. So pop on over, say hi, and tell us what you like or. dislike about the magazine.

### Meet UP @ 1UP.com

The all-new 1UP is here, and it's exploding with new features! We've still got all of that great daily content you've come to know and love, but we're now the first-ever destination for gamers to meet, play, get informed, and show off.

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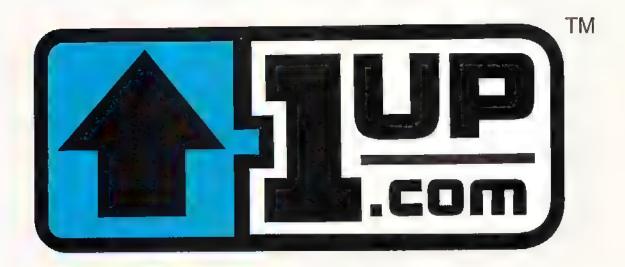












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EGM Fans 15 364 IOIN THIS CLUB



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#### Doomed Hey, why don't I get a haiku, too?

JEFF GREEN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

So, I was sitting in my office, feet on the desk, flask in hand, breathing a sigh of relief that another fantabulous issue was in the bag when the big news came: Id Software and Activision had announced that Doom 3 had finally gone gold and was ready for review. That was the good news. The bad news was that if we wanted to review it in this issue and avoid waiting a month, we had to go to Activision's office in Santa Monica and play the game there. The risk of piracy was

too high for the company to let even one copy out of its sights—an understandable worry. The problem, That's not standard operating procedure for us. We want to experience games exactly as you would. And you're not going to be playing it at Activision on a state-of-the-art PC with the developers standing over your shoulder telling you how coof their game is. But this is Doom 3! How could we say no?! So here's what we did Darren Gladstone and after down there, Darren played the game from start to finish, while I was the U.N. observer ensuring the process was kosher. And it was, Darren played the whole thing, with no meddling from id or Activision. They left him alone. And he loved it. And I dia, too. And so will you, it still wasn't our ideal way to review a game, but this is a crucia game and a crucial review. Doom 3 is everything we hoped it could be. Upgrade now



KRISTEN SALVATORE

'Mom," I hear them car "Deadline extension for me?" Not on your life, pal



ROBERT COFFEY

Sleenylime crawlsnace Hot drifter sammings wild caseer Bachdub hiled with tears



DARREN GLADSTONE

Games: Doom 3, Missing Head reeling, too much writing He needs a drink now



WILLIAM O'WEAL

So many choices leguila? Bourbon? Lap dance? Yn loves his vices



JOHNNY CILL PREVIEWS LOCKER

Running maral bon Help SF AIDS Foundation Great cause, please support



RYAN SCOTT

Been bere for a year Gotten moved around four times Where is my stapler?



ROB SCHULTZ

Mister fancypants Sphinder says what? Tell me please, left vorrare bossman.



HICHAEL JENNINGS

Screenshols multiplying Layers merge into design A thing of danger



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Editor-In-Chilaf Executive Editor Page 1 - 21 . Managing Editor 1 100 0 1-10 Technical Editor Senior Editor Darren Gladiste o Previows Editor 1-15-28-2

CO-ROM Ed tor Mya: 5.03 DESIGN

Art Director Rob anhalt,
Associate Art Director Michael Jennings

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Charles Ardat, T. Byrl Baker, Loyd Case, Iorn Chick Bruce Geryk, Jeff Lackey, Rank ael Liberatore chomas I. McDonald, Erik Walipars

Founder Russell Sipo

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Senior Vice President Cone Strang Editorial Director John Davison Creative Director Simon t ах Business Director Bill Danities

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Consumer Group Circulation Director Single Copy Sales Director Sonlor Nowsstand Sales Manager Internet and Partnership Marketing Director

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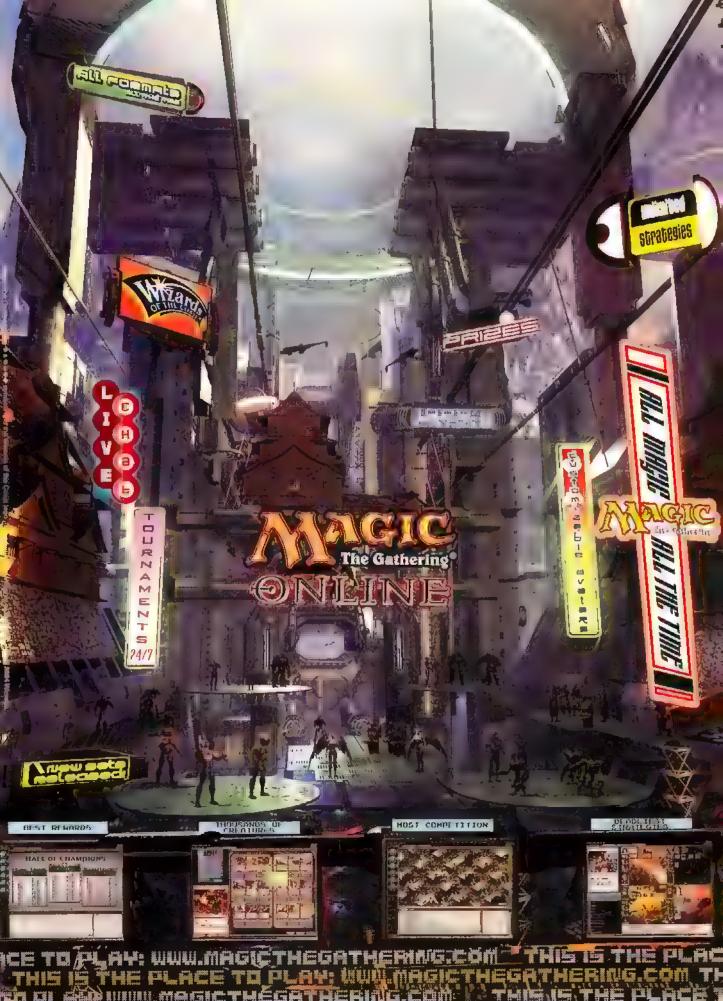
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## Letters Snappy answers to stupid questions



What If grass had nerves and mouths to scream when 100 mowed RP Whoe...

Realizing Your Potential ' The important thing is this! To be able at

any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become, -Charles Du Bois

How's this for a thought-provoking quote? I recommend you read through this quote three or four times to really absorb the subtleties of it

Here are some questions for you to think about that build on this thought

Who are you right now?

How do your colleagues see you?

How would they describe you?

How would your best friend describe you?

Pick out 10 words or phrases that these people would use to describe you-choose five positives or strengths and five negatives or weaknesses. Take a couple of minutes and do it, please

This describes who you are right now. Is this who you want to be?

Even more important, is this the best you

can/could be? How much of your potential are you

actually realizing? There is who you are right now, and then there is who you could be right now.

How would you like to be described as a reader or manager?

How would you like to be described as a friend?

A question to ask yourself daily is what actions can you take today, this week, and this month to move toward being the best you could be?

The size of the gap that exists between who you are and who you should/could be directly correlates to your success and happiness in life.

So few of us are really operating at the evel we are capable of.

Ross McBride Managing Director The Corporate Performance Institute

Sadly, Ross, we at CGW are really operating at the highest level we are capable of. After too many deep-fryer calamities than we can count or care to remember, we have-like the most foul, stagnant water Imaginable-sunk to our

n page 44 of your August Issue, the comment was made: "With a name like 'hippogryph,' shouldn't the creature look half hippo?" To clarify, the name hippogryph comes from the Greek "hippos," meaning horse and "griffen," which means griffin. Thus, the hippogryph is a half horse, half griffin, with the front of griffin (which is simply an eagle) and the back of a horse. Hippopotamuses, on the other hand, are literally "water horses." I hope that from this point on we can avoid any confusion,

Guardian of the Myths

Thank you so much for guarding the myths. We, like the rest of America, salute you and your awe-inspiring devotion to this most sacred duty. But we're puzzled: Why doesn't Merv Griffin look more like an eagle?



appropriate level. We offer your intelligent, thought-provoking rhetoric to our younger readers, at least a handful of which might not be beyond saving.



#### Crusader-No Luck

I was flipping through an old magazine when saw that you named Crusader: No Remarse the most underrated Hall of Fame. game Second to X-COM, this

game started more fights between me and my brother than any other game on our one computer, and now we can't play it anymore. My version (the only version) is DOS only. Do you know how I could load it. or where I could get a Windows version?

**David Kovacs** 

Sorry, David, we don't. Back when we finally gave Crusader its due and put it in the Hall of Fame, we tried playing it In order to get new screenshots-and just to have an awesome good time. No dice. We couldn't get it working and we don't know of any Windows version. either. Life...she is a chain-smoking bitch, no?

#### Kudos Korner

i just received my (OK, my husband's) August copy of CGW, and I have to give kudos to Eric Johnston, the senior software engineer at LucasArts, for opening up his heart to leukemia survivor Ben Duskin, God bless him for helping make a young boy's wish come true. And not surprisingly, it didn't take "years and millions of dollars to create" the game or make the wish come true

Iva F.

We have to agree with you. This is probably the coolest story of the year in gaming.



Please add more free, full-version games on DVD discs! More **DVD cover mounts, please!** 

-Rodel Rufo

Most people spend their days dealing with jerks of all kinds who inflict generous amounts of frustration upon them. Who needs that in their games?

—Richstex







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What's so bad about San Diego?

At the risk of having to enter the witness. protection program, change my name, and relocate to San Diego, I feel the need to point out that Mr. Coffey's view on difficulty settings is a just bit askew. Not all of us play games for a living, Some of us work full-time jobs as software engineers and spend weekends going door-to-door selling subscriptions to Jet magazine only to barely make ends meet. Playing a game on Normal or Expert difficulty level is not about being masculine-it's about having a nondiminished gaming experience if you wish to mindlessly blast through 90 levels of Half-Life 2 on Easy and ruin the experience for yourself, then so be it. But does Mr. Coffey expect me to run down to the local CompUSA, plop down \$90 on a special edition (that I've been waiting three years to be released), then run back home and finish it in one three-hour sitting on Easy? Then what? I would find this, to say the least, a bit unfulfilling I suggest that Mr. Coffey take a step back and try to see things from a normal gamer's perspective. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must get back to packing (Now where did I leave that curling (ron?)

P.S. And no, I've never been mistaken for Tyne Daly. Well...maybe Rosie O'Donnell, but never Tyne Daly.

#### Todd Wilkinson

You make some good points, Todd. Then you completely undercut your argument by confessing to your \$90 outlay for some marketeer's boondoggle, and it becomes clear that you, sir, are a millionairel Obviously, your insanely luxurious lifestyle means you have not only the time to play all games on the hardest setting, but you can do so on a solid-gold computer while wearing a spun-gold tuxedo surrounded by supermodels in platinum G-strings. Nice try.

#### Making lemonade

I noticed a lot of people sending in letters teiling you how outraged they were over the Sync covering—apparently they missed the true genius of the idea I felt I'd pass along just how great of an idea I thought it was with a recent event. I discovered a moth flying around In my room. I was determined to destroy it, and destroy it I did. Using the Sync covering from the June 2004 issue. I was able to kill the moth without damaging the actual magazine coveri I later used the cover to foil a bank robbery and save the president's life

Kudos to the geniuses behind that marketing ploy!

Will Crawford

#### Bruce and Tom to the Rescue

I really liked the Tom vs. Bruce Thrones & Patriots playoff in your August issue. It was totally hysterical. I'm like every body else: I lead a frantic life and need a laugh once in a while. Maybe people get more stuff when they get older, but they can still get stressed out. If you think having a boss is sometimes bad, try having a business partner. With a wife, kids, an ex, a staff, property, vehicles, a microwave, a vacuum cleaner, and a mood watch, something is always broken or someone is always out of shape. Everybody's the same. We all need to get away from annoying people (like Jeff) and have a few laughs. All the more reason articles like Bruce and Tom's are so great. Good going, guys, and keep up the good work. (Sometimes your articles even have some good tips, but that's secondary.)

While I'm on the topic of annoying people, Jeff, I miss you! You're no Mark Twain, but you can be funny once in a while. Why don't you write some more of your stuff? Your wife (and everybody else) knows you're a no-good shiftless. bum. You can't do any more damage to your marriage or your credibility with your team, so write some more articles. I'm from Toronto, and you've all (even Wil) given my sled dogs and me many happy moments. All the best, guys. Thanks for keeping me and so many other people happy

Sir Stanley

It's our pleasure to please you, Sir Stanley. Even if you're Canadian,

#### Department of Korrections



In last month's CGW, we incorrectly printed the score for Joint Operations: Typhoon Rising, The official CGW score is 4.5 stars and is an Editors Choice. CGW regrets the error.



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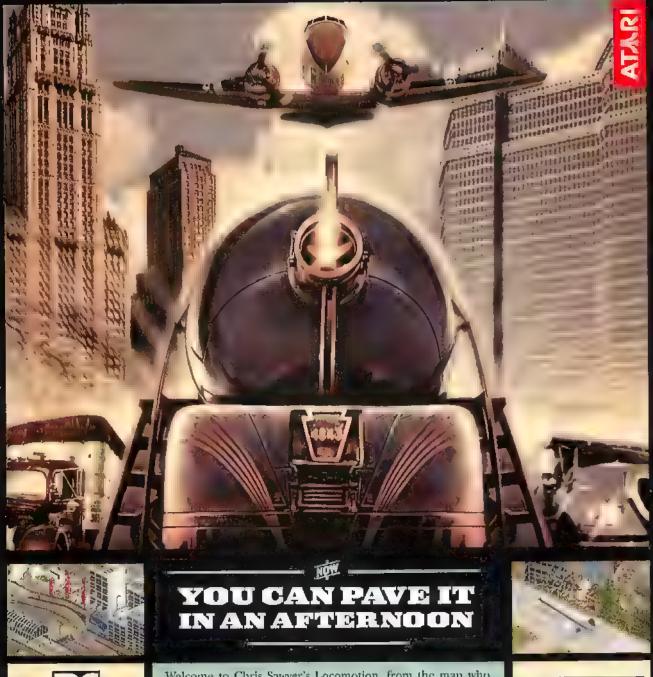
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## Radar









CGW gets the inside scoop on the next season

Bugged eres a back door into your PE;



a war ummi Var games are nothing new, but its started looking at the



รที่บัลไทริกัส dead liéw péople háve ept it alive with artual re-creations





elcome back, everyone! it's October, and you know what that means: Madden cover model Ray Lewis is probably nursing

that injury he got due to the Madden Cover Curse, Tiger Woods is set to rock the golf world, we hope there isn't an NHL lockout, and it's time for some "proper football." Sharing set space with Will O'Neal, I'm Darren Gladstone, and this is CGW SportsCenter.



Tonight we're here to talk about just about the only game left in town: EA Sports. It was only a couple of years ago that everyone wanted a piece of the PC sports pie, Sierra, Microsoft, 3DO--you name it. But EA was the only one strong enough to win the title. But enough jibber-labber, let's hit it

#### Madden NFL 2005

Madden has been dominating the digital griding for almost 14 years, and with the overwhelming lack of competition (both figuratively and literally), it seems that its dominance will no doubt continue. Loath to rest on its laurels, the playbook is changing, and 2005 is the Year of the Hit The development team has been taking cues from current trends in the NFL, so the game's defense is getting a makeover Assistant producer Damion Banks acknowledged as much at a recent press conference, saying, "A good defense is what wins championships."

How are you going to win one for the Gipper? A controller such as Logitech's PlayStation-ish Dual Act on gamepad is one of the keys to victory. While Coach Banks says that keyboard/mouse players won't be penalized, they won't be able to take advantage of this year's biggest addition, the hit stick. This feature is all about timing and momentum. Get it right and BAM-you're rewarded with unique tackles (from the 1,000-plus animations) and increased chances of causing a fumble. Screw-ups however, will leeve you with a couple of broken ankies while you retrieve your lock from the turf

Making better use of the analog stick in this year's PC version, the enhanced Playmaker feature will allow you to better call the shots on the fly. Defensively, you'll be able to quickly assign individual man coverage ("locking" on or off a player) or shift back to a zone defensegreat for faking out receivers. Offense hasn't been left out, though, You'll be able to change formations without changing the play. And that isn't even going into the fact that you'll be able to create your own audibles.

Another big deal this year is the ability to instill some situational awareness into your players' brains. Option plays will have the experienced All-controlled players (let's say Randy Moss, for example) looking for different routes, while the rookies will more often than not just go long. As for going head-to-head online. Banks says EA doesn't need Punkbuster With fairplay settings in place, Banks says there will be fair reporting of cheats and people who punk out of losing matches.

Will you give a rat's ass about the create-a-fan topless, face-painted, beergut-ridden guy you can re-create in the game? Probably not, but close-ups

throughout will add flavor and indicate how good or bad you're doing. What you probably will care about is the career mode, which is dubbed Storyline Central Using a PDA interface, you keep track of your team, its progress, and the 20,000 different real news stories that can impact your season-and for added flavor, there's a recorded radio show. The Tony Bruno Show gets real coaches and players to come in and comment on how your team is progressing. You get to keep going until you run the team into the ground. Fail to meet owner expectations and you're out of a job.

#### NHL 2005

Time to bit the ice, Darren! Last year, the NHL franchise got a few teeth knocked out. Literally 2004's game was based entirely on thuggery. With all that focus on hitting and beating the snot out of Tie Domi, I forgot we were supposed to score points to win

in typical EA fash on, assistant producer Dan Sochan is promising to build on the flash factor with authentic coliseum layouts; six hundred top players remodeled from scratch and given personalities; and more subtle touches, such as seeing the glass shake or shatter. What you'll notice when you start playing is the focus on linesse and passing. With open-ice support, you're not locked in to playing as the guy with the puck. So get your lazy ass into position and get yourself open for the pass. When you're on defense, you can even call out picks. All this, and with the refined skating engine, you'll have traffer control

More important, the A.I. idiocy is being squashed. A pro-skater knows better than to go offsides over the blue line. So should computer-controlled players Now they do. Players side-skate by the blue line, and they behave more like their real-life counterparts. Aggressiveness passing, and shooting blases mean that when you aren't controlling Darien Hatcher, he's gonna go looking for trouble (Sochan's favorite)

Among the single-player modes is a World Cup-type hockey tournament based on the new real-world event. The dynasty mode is even more of a sports RPG than it was last season. Each team has an owner with a unique personality and different goals for each season. As with Madden, you've got to meet expectations or get canned. There's also a risk/reward system for drafting and D

2005 is going to be known in the **Madden** series as the Year of the Hit. Gtrading players, Try low-balling Lemieux one time too many and he'll be so offended that he'll never sign with your team. Another unusual addition is a consolelike free-for-all mode. This over-the-top minigame is a half-ice grudge match for scoring and beating up 40 top players in the league. Sochan also let slip that console-PC online multiplayer matches are on tap for 2006. And hey if there's a lockout, hockey's digital version may be the only game in town.

#### Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005

Associate producer Rich Rogers teed up for some hushed silence on the green, tasking about building the better Tiger traps into this year's golf game, Continuing the tradition of building up attributes RPG-style, there is a lot to unlock in this game, with GameFace II and the ability to customize your swing

You'll be able to take on 15 real tour players on 14 different courses. Play against-and unlock-legends such as Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, and Arnold Palmer But the real interesting part is making each course even more challenging by "Tiger-proofing" it. Shorten or lengthen the course, tighten the green, raise or lower the glevation-trust us you'll be able to make this game a lot tougher if you want. Ultimately, you want to assemble your "dream 18." Take the 18 most tweaked-out holes from all the courses you've unlocked and try to win the Masters.

#### FIFA Soccer 2005

Will who once held down the title for best PC soccer player ever, is ready to go international! While FIFA Soccer 2005 scores points every year, soccer is probably the only category in which EA still has to



stare down some tough competition Most notable is Konami's Winning Eleven series, which has been winning the console cup and is coming on strong for the PC crowds (see this month's review of Winning Eleven for more on that),

What could propel FIFA this season is a much-needed quality first-touch play style. While playing, increased sensitivity and a fluid kinetic system are incorporated so that real-world momentum comes into play. Let's say you're running downfield and a ball lands. You need to quickly change direction and kick. Your momentum carries you along



13 Yet again, Conway gets knocked on his ass.

better than humiliating and deking out your opponent. And when you aren't in control of the ball, you'll still be in control of your teammates by calling tackles or sending teammates down the line. What

#### What could propel FIFA this season is a much-needed first-touch play style.

after you kick, or, if you try forcing a move, your gov will fall flat on his ass.

Plenty of added animations make it feel even more authentic, with plenty of differ ent ball traps and passes. Still, nothing's

still needs to be worked on is the A.I. After all, as you're running downfield, you still have to rely on your team to hear the announcer scream "Gooooooooaaaaaal!" ■ Darren Gladstone and Wil O'Neal

#### **Fantasy Football Draft**

Carrie and street weeks, the provided providing space. information provider, IIA Sports is also kicking off a Wels-based fastesy football league for the 2004-2005 season. Some of the highlights of matili be socilable: real-time stat coverage candings and injury reports; weekly prediction and player news. Teams can even compete for rizas like \$20 off EA sumer and an EA Specie abbiekeed trophy

on bucks buys without of more a subject reasons. ville 100 bongs lets you be the commissioner of our own league, in which you call the rules and earing systems for the to \$2 team enters. Want o get started? Go to www.easports.com/fantage but for the moment, here are Wife too bloke f the All-O'Neal team



#### Ricky Williams

in dream Non eatly for a break



#### Todd Heap

Phoneon Sharpe and will factor greatly (nto this



#### Tom Brady

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Diesel fuelt (The majore About it Richick is confirmed for the PC. Also in the works are two other matter in the series and hopefully normanically and majore should be presented by the confirmed by the confirme

## EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD







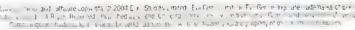






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HOT ZONE

### Game Hunting

Hackers have a back door to your PC: games

top, if you're playing an unpatched version of Unreal Tournament 2004 online right now, hackers could sneak on to your PC. Not many people think about that. But Luigi Auriemma does,

Auriemma has been called a lot of things in the past year; a programmer, an independent security researcher-he was even falsely accused of being a hacker and extortionist. What this 23-year-old from Milan, Italy, will be remembered for though, is doing the one job that no one else will looking for security hores in games and then reporting them to the proper author ties

#### Vulnerable

Most recently, he discovered the security hole inside Unreal's multiplayer code. By naminering a game server, hackers can easily implant programs for remote code execution to the host machine or spoof IP addresses to gain access to your PC Even though this particular issue affects only the game servers using unpatched code, it doesn't mean you're totally safe

The biggest single security threat from playing an online game is shutting off ant virus software just to get the most out of playing a game," says Symantec spokesperson Kraig Lane. Lane oversees Symantee's Consumer Internet Security Products line (which includes programs such as Norton AntiVirus and Norton Personal Firewall) and is an avid gamer. Lane says that it's not like the old days when AV software would choke down system performance. He says, "We've got much more powerful PCs today that can jugge multiple tasks, and most games now preload levels into memory." This means the eternal loading screen for Far Cry will last a little longer, but it won't impact gameplay. once you get started. Lane stressed that any time you go online, you're exposing yourself to possible attacks.

So get some firewall software, make sure the antivirus program is running. eave the lights on, deadbolt your door The point, according to Lane, is that "you open e-mails with a cautious frame of mind, and just because you're playing a game you aren't going to be 100 percent safe," For example, have you tried playing a map latery? And do you find that in order to join the fight, your computer needs to download a few files from the host? This is how it gets started

#### Plugging leaks

Then there's Half-Life 2. Valve's vaunted Steam service could have been compromised with the code theft. What then? Will hundreds of thousands of people be lining. up to buy a Trojan horse that allows hackers to stroll onto their PCs? While nobody's talking at Valve, Auriemma is. He says, "The HL2 code theft could be

a problem only if programmers have badly programmed the game. Proprietary protocols, hidden functions, and encryption are the real

risks for the users. Hopefully, the year delay on HL2 will have removed any weak points

Epic MegaGames took Auriemma's warnings seriously and re-eased a fix to the Unreal code, the V3236 patch, But not every-

one is as quick to

react. One, there's the sad reality that "most games are supported only for a short time, so new bugs are never officially fixed," according to Auriemma. Other companies are occasionally taken aback by outsiders uncovering code flaws, in one case, GameSpy accused Aurzemma of being up to no good. While spokespeople were unavailable for comment, we did get to read the cease-and-desist letter, which claimed he had, among other things, demanded money for his findings (which Auriemma says is totally untrue),

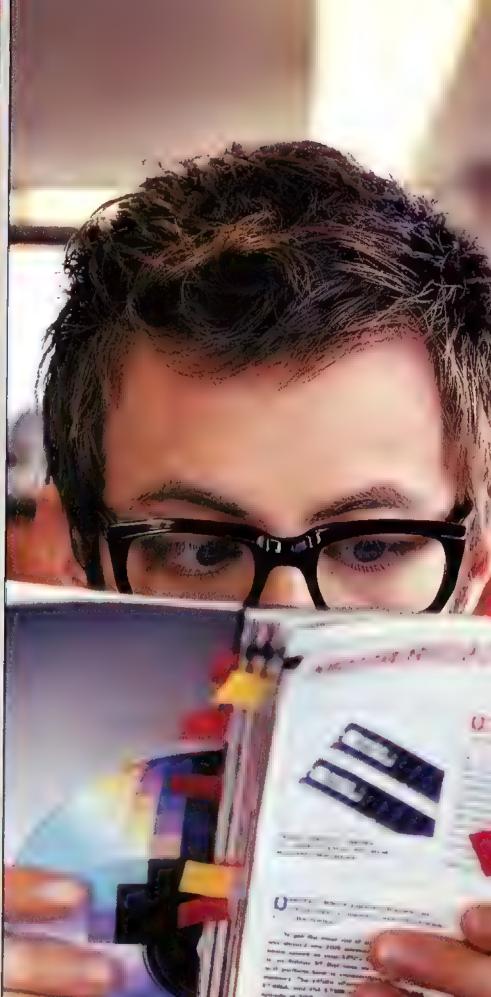
Lane wanted to give his two cents and then some on the whole GameSpy matter "Business software security researchers have been doing this for years, it's an understood necessity, finding those securty holes." Microsoft issues updates and

patches all the time, often for bugs that have been caught by these experts, More important. Lane says, "Luigi is the only guy out there [focusing on games as a possible security hole], and he got a very strange backlash as a result." @ Darren Gladstone

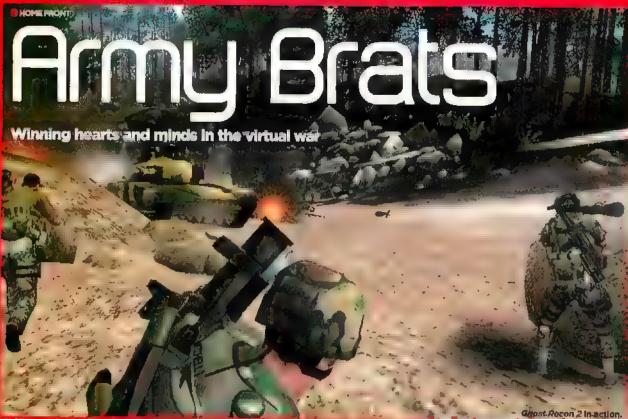
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o in teams of four. Stay aiert. Keep the squad together and alive. All this is taught to us by playing PC war games.

Once upon a time, a customized Doom mod was made to help train the military. Now, games are being made from scratch, based on semirealistic scenarios that entertain and teach civijans military tactics used in real combat iltuations. Are these games propagare da, conditioning us to hate and kill? Or are they just good, clean fun?

#### War on error

For some, Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2 s proof enough of U.S. warmongering. This upcoming game sees Ghosts-U.S. equads—shipped to North Korea to conront a general who is diverting food aid to the military during a famine. He is quickly rising to power, and it's your job to stop a coup from taking place

A recent story in the U.S. military's stars and Stripes newspaper ren a quote (which first appeared in Tongil, a government-run North Korean newspaper) that stated, "[Americans] have shown their natred for us. This may be a game to them now, but...in war, they will only face. miserable defeat and gruesome deaths Whosi Did North Korea just call us out over a game

Ghost Recon 2 game designer Christian Allen says that "games, especially those set in fictional conflicts, are simply entertainment." But any game that takes place in a contemporary, real-world setting is bound to draw some heat: "Various people have been unhappy with plot lines in (our) games," he adds, Some Russian groups expressed unhappiness with the irst Ghost Recon, which deployed troops to the Republic of Georgia, but Aller explains, "[Red Storm] gets a lot of sup-port from fans who live in [countries where these games take place]

Kevin Ramirez, an avid gamer and spokesperson for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) thinks it boils down to the videogame violence question. Someone Isn't going to hate North Koreans after playing a game but young kids and teenagers who play these games might not (understand) the historical context behind events in the game," in the case of Ghost Recon 2.11 could make the child want to learn more about North Korea-or, in unchecked by parents, it could spell trouble.



#### The next hig ballie

While publishers must artfully dodge those fine lines of international relations one game developer must be extrasens rive. "Since [America's Army] is made by contractors for the U.S. Army, we're well aware of the implications of creating real world scenarios," says Christopher M.

ILCWS : >> In an effort to stop cybercafe violence, Los Angeles county is cracking down on internet café hours for minors. FEED They can play only between 1:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Any time after that, there are fewer idiots in the chat rooms. >>



The state of the s serray. Their a why then a world taken action places of people, and we're wittereren. ab to implicate foreign governments

The U.S. Armate solutions feet marking abana hours the total and to the lobe. If they happen to look the tre Hiddle Bait: Eastern Biltone: in terrio mounted Asian nation; an bore: Their ocording to Chambers - howether FS. Army pame—titles: Oyaymatth will when it comes but meet spring. I'm ringle-player game will focus on amalibetter trained and better sculpost forces taking on a much larger fool(this Black Hawk Down Considering tractiti some will be free it sure makes a good savertisement of a fancy categorise "propagander—for the US Army Actually" Chambars says. 199181

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The Army's Auventure Van Ig action.

Silly 28 . Entire married of mally h sand in in a signal with the company pamen from them, cleme (introduction) outside to shoot the united works (in the color) and the colors of the color

#### "[The America's Army game] is one of the best sources of positive awareness."

my lights past as mortis 29 percent aung adults aged 16 to 24 mentioned merica's Army, Same good for 19 person of parents with children aged to to 24 his trails behind TV severage of the nalizati and the war on harries an action nr positive press for the militars

The America's Americanic misners soing a little too good a job or recrui on? says Ramicer, For startery online serformence is monitored/on leader partie That to proportion in the later The transfer of the contract o

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#### Top 5 Downloads

The best money you'll never spend

#### FOCUSION: Gravity

Gravity sucks-unless it is implemented well in a physics-based game along the lines of this month's selections.



#### Gish \$19,95

Gish sets the piatformer genre on its head by changing the protagonist into a gelal nous far ball that squishes into light places, troblens up to

squash enemies, grows spikes to cling to walls, and jumps by using Superball-like compression. www.chraniclogic.com/gish



#### N Free

An abstract hybrid platformer and puzzle dame. Ademands that players come to grips with

its reduced-gravity environment so that they can navigate clever levels while avoiding more clever enemies, www.harveycartel.org/metanet/



#### Hamsterball \$19.99

Most old school gamers longly recall Marble Madness. and Hamsterballtoms that low-res relic into a smoothrolling and slick roller-coaster ride Yes. There is a finy namster in the ball.

www.raptisoft.com



#### Neverball Free

Neverball may look a lot like Hamsterball in the screenshots, but it is more akin to Game(Libe's Monkey Ball than Marble Madness, Use the mouse

to tilt the playing field and roll the ball through coms and past obstacles to hit the goal and proceed to the next chanenging level.

www.icculus.org/neverball



#### Aerial Antics

\$19.95

Any game that involves a retpack is worth checking out on general principle, and thrusting around on one comprises the core gameplay of Aerial Antics. Too bad the music sucks.

www.leadfootproductions.com

## nd a Deeper Dungeor

#### Game guru DW Bradley on building a better RPG

he PC was once the proud home of role-playing greatness, but where have all the good RPGs gone? While there are rare exceptions, like KOTOR, the PC Isn't what it used to be when it comes to RPGs. For starters, according to game guru DW Bradley, they are the toughest games to make. "We've had a major jump in hardware over the last 10 years, but these better-looking games haven't been nearly as fun or creative [as those of the old days]," he explains,

This isn't nostalgia talking. As one of the men behind the Wizardry series, Bradley knows what works and what doesn't, RPGs have gone two ways: Point-and-click action à la Diablo and turn-based micromanagement "Point-and-click [gameplay] is laborious and repetitive, while turnbased, automated combat removes care

#### New world orders

More control needs to be in the hands of the players; they need to feel like they have more vested in the world. That, says Bradley, is what will happen this fall when Dungeon. Lards hits store snelves. He hopes to bridge the gap between the pen-and-paper experiences of a rea - Ife game and the action of a

Games may look better, but they're not as creative or fun as [those of the old days].

good computer game. That is, your skill at using the keyboard to land blows and dodge fireballs is as important as the ability points you develop.

"This is the game that I've always wanted to make," says Bradley There's a full 3D world that the player interacts with and a complex story line worthy of the games of yesteryear, but the achievement is being able to successfully bring it all together and make it feel as real as possible to the player. The nonlinear world means you're free to uncover the mysteries of the game at your own pace and a unique characterdevelopment structure doesn't lock you into a set path. (Every class has access to just about every skill; some are just harder to learn than others.)

Over the past decade, we've seen a number of great companies fold because they took chances on the wrong thing Interplay (CGW #242, page 29) is a great example of that. The development costs for games have skyrocketed, and as a result, they have gotten to the practical scales of making a movie. "Since these costs are so high, there's been a lot of copyng of the Baldur's Gate formula and not enough innovation," Bradley adds.

Obviously, he has a lot invested in his own project, but Bradley insists that Dungeon Lords "represents the kind of game that people have been craving " We'll be able to tell you if that's the case in another month or two B Darren Gladstone





#### Console Corner 🔤

Games worth grabbing from your little brother

Not every good game comes out on the PC Sad we know, but it's the truth. So, as a service to you, we pick out one game that stands above the rest

#### XBOX

Sit back for a little story, a story that you create by your choices in the game. This sprawling fantasy action-adventure promises a huge world that evolves with you and a character who can be as good

or as bad as you want him to be Start as a child and grow into a man based on your actions. Rat bastards that do all the wrong things will wind up looking nasty. and won't be too welcome by the locals This ambitious concept has been kicking around for years, but the often-delayed Fable should finally be on store shelves by the time you read this-we hope ALSO CHECK OUT: Forgotten Realms. Demon Stone (PS2, Xbox), Donkey Konga (GC)





"Full transal December The macriful that threatens terms basic for Cooks Share the main shall be seen by conversel has optioned the film with first-time director finds (ccalling )

# UNITED OFFENSIVE EXPANSION PACK

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urking near a power pellet, I crouch uncomfortably between two parked cars. "Is Pac-Man hot? Which dots are gone?" I ask my controller via cell phone. Wearing a jagged sheet over my head with a "pellet map" taped to my inner arm, I am prepared to eat Pac-Man, get eaten, or get hit by a car. I hope for invincibility.

#### Chost busting

Pac Manhattan (www.pacmanhattan.com), a large-scale live-action Pac-Man game created by a class of NYU Interactive terecommunications program grad students, was played this past May, Instead of dots and tunnels, the game is remapped onto a 24block grid surrounding Washington Square Park. After all, no place is more Pac-worthy than New York City.

Part social experiment and part game, Pac Manhattan is real people playing by videogame rules. Well, except that in real life, Pac-Man can run across the street and not to his death when trapped between two ghosts. Players include four ghost runners and Pac-Man, all who relay their coordinates via cell phone to their controllers, who are networked with a common Shockwave map application. While ghosts constantly update their locations, the ghost controllers surmise



New Yorkers have now seen everything.

Pac-Man's whereabouts based on the dots that have been cleared.

Early Saturday morning, I am handed my Clyde poncho, along with Pinky, Inky, and Blinky. The Pac-Man player's outfit looks best-bisected by a circular cardboard Pac-Man prop, he looks like a survivor of a freak Pac-Man/human head-on collision

#### Press Start

We are "released" from the ghost pen under the Washington Arch one by one, just like in the arcade game. Though at first we have a strategy of combing the west grid, our plan is thrown out the window in the excitement of the running and yelling. The game becomes a free-for-all.

The game blocks are long, unbelievably long, so I walk. A curious couple sees me lurking near a fire hydrant and tangle of yetlow construction tape. Hook over and vell, "This is human Pac-Man!" They cheer back! People love Pac-Man, and we are recognized all over as videogame celebrities that day.

Hurk near the bonus fruit, a cup of read cherries. There he isl Pac-Man! I spring across MacDougal but quickly lose the longlimbed yellow one. His legs are twice as long as mine! As I make my way over to a cluster of uncleared dots, I hover near the last nower pellet. When i see Pac-Man, I run after him. But he is also running after me. Why?

He tags me, and a am out! My controller fails to mention that I was "b inking" Meanwhile, Pinky intercepts Pac-Man with a ethal combo of lurking followed by a surprise attack.

As a relatively low-tech student project, Pac Manhattan actually worked well. Ms. Pac-Man better watch herself, though. There's a new sheriff in town. S Raina Lee

#### The Good, the Bad News and views from the Wild West



#### The Good

Blotolins We Could to all whiny and pitchy about low long the anno game ook bul you

west resembly from that his rea have and it kicks as allo no onch bus neek just like we hoped it would After all these years, id software delivers the Big One, and its even hing we could have hoped to paradi sour la hous-Mill marie



#### The Rec Pl- galvar drought ... MANAGE STEEL A TY, VOITH HER

eriod Indeed new RC game and those than MAN PREMISON Inter out have

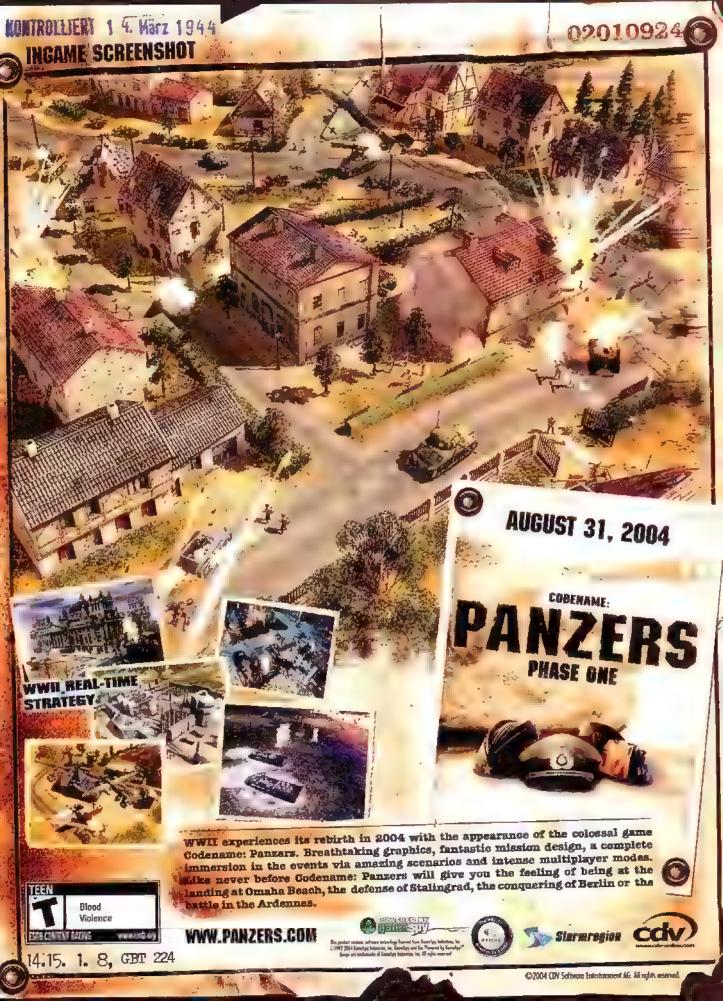
Land the second second second second files to set doom and gloom ocuting because there are still many wrest titles on the horizon But this is one of those morths where we find ourselves playing reldure Gate of Heroes II or Gree Mindango again and wondening There I all the at the resident



he Uai EAS ON THE Strategy coked at 17 long term

cretury in politimane to look like that endiess car wreak portraved w Many Luc Goddard's Weekend, With he pancellation of \$20, that makes he second sequel to Ultime Online nd row cancelled. This follows on nement of the Motor City Colline. resco, the disappointing Earth and eyong the underschieving Similar online the Malestic Implosion ously, does anyone know what med ayo anido as there

S | | | Bioods culture the sampless action harding of SidodRaying will get her own comic books. The first letter mobilished by I sho I, will conside with the game's selected the Kill of the spinites in your terzoeblichers come!







( Company

# Pinball Wizards

Underground programmers sure play a mean pinball

or pinball fane, October 5, 1898, is a day that lives in Infanty. That's when Bally/Williams, the world's biggest producer of pinball, machines, turned off its assembly lines for ever. Thankfully, seme slaves to the aliver ball have taken it upon themselves to save their heritage by creating pinball-emulation programs. Today, a huge online community is growing. Timeless tables are being re-created while whole new ones are being built for a new generation of players.

#### Insert coins

Classic plaball machines were on the brink of being relegated to dusty werehouses and private collections, but one man took it upon himself to save pinball from history dustbin in early 2000. Randy Davis, and dustbin in order to be a pinball-playing coworker (and by Bill Budge's Pinball Construction Set) to



Manual Mass, so ediplact table, it in the same regular of their people counts than open thing

## The Original Pinball Wizard

The concept of virtual pinball has been around for nearly 20 years. In 1985, Bill Budge, a game designer working for Electronic Arts, created the Pinball Construction Set, which allowed players to drag and drop pinball components on a virtual playfield While PCS wasn't the first pinball simulation, it was the first that let users design and share tables. It wasn't a huge hit, but it developed a cult following.

create the Visual Pinball programming language, His mission: make it as simple as possible. He took a drag-and-drop interface that combined Visual Basic, Ch., and activeX controls to give users increased with the combined visual Basic, Ch., and activeX controls to give users increased with the combined visual basic, Ch., and activeX controls to give users increased without the dealing is done in a strictly 2D environment, the program renders tables in full 3D allowing for realistic physics using ramps and multilevel playfields. Visual Physilinade it (relatively) easy for people to recrease their favorite old pinball tables using

photos and manufacturer's achematics. Entitusiasts the world over began re-creating their favorite old pinball games, all the way from the early 1900s through the 70s and 80s. But the introduction of 80m poords for pinball machines in 1975 made things a little more complicated for the likes of Visual Pinball. These ROMs were used to digitally dictate scoring, control gameplay, and play event sounds (like, for example, Raul Julia yelling out "The Mamushkal" in The Addems Family pinball.

One man took it upon himself to save pinball from history's dustbin in early 2000—Randy Davis

· co. N. N. School S. C. T. C. oc-matrix displays were implimented, these ROMs Would all inne to control the digital minicarnes, Enter PinMAMI InMAME could be combine ith Visual Pinbali to make INMAME which allowed ions to visually build a table ind then access the BOM he

#### Bail salvaci

With all these from the comme into broke up into faciliano to water the curries they wenter plays one Chttp://irpinball cheticom/) that re-created ider, ore 1975 games using neuel Pinbell; and anche INWAVOFORUMI COM notables/h-habich fra marested more than 404 cent carnes—that utilized KOME. Popular tables include Mack Knight (the first to have beech multiball, and a multiavel playfield). The Yellight

Zone, and 76/minaton 1 - and amon ounds and effects you remainless are an hard. There invery little overled between he two groups since many Vieuel Pinbel western have no interest in playing RO award sames and vice versa. Still, even me involved agrees that being able to reate and share games they played address to what league them gising

Others have spected their own promise emes, either issued on popular lives e (7) a Jetsman is one notable exam pie) of wing an original idea. These iesignithun the camub from old fail oned designificant and single-level arries so playfields that have thatkness amps or secressing each other triol vols and walls lined with flippers resigns are that limited only by the reator's inspiration, and 10 for the approximately SDG different last in boards evaluation for devictions neze are even a few examples of Consultation of Michael agency (Supple)



wife of boston a shouldfull, the of the are the created in which the player the the planta of the same facility of the hand balls into holes

to write don't the lucus page on your all-amulation increment? The agentical ter the question on section part although thereis no appearent enemer twomopped put til sight over a Vetrago, and A Park Value of the Vietn Phose can be Total College COPE C TROP THE WAY TON TO THE KIND erkereandere add mon millem cores who cold a recent addition like them. oup image constitution to make the Alexander to the later of the

All Philippinshippins de detall la company ownerster, resolven over chargement undrade a vantage machinese from the THE PERSON NAMED AND POST OFFICE AND PARTY. The control of the co

#### Putting It All Together

- Create a PINBALL directory on your C drive.
- Install Visual Pinball TB6.1 and VpinMAME 1.32.001 into it.
- Run the VpinMAME setup program to link everything together.
- Openioad the newest VBS Scripts (v3.12) into your Tables folder.
- Download font pack v3.8 and place it in your PC's font folder (in the Control Panel).
- Download the PinMAME samples and place them in the VpinMAME\samples directory.
- 2 Download new tables into the Tables directory.
- Download ROMs for newer tables into the VpinMAME\roms directory.
- Double-click on the table you want to play!

Don't know where to find the files? Try www.vpforums.com/vptables/tables.php. Need more detailed instructions? Go to www.mameworld.net/.

## 10, 15 Years

at we said when you were nursing



#### 5 Years Ago. October 1999

Inbred ass clown Robert Coffey-as his "fans" refer to him-started getting the first trickles of hate mail that, years

later with Scorched Earth, would swell into a tidal wave of loathing. This redesign issue marked the debut of CGW's Inside Gaming series of genre columns, and Coffey had the temerity to suggest that Alpha Centauri might've been better if people had just understood it. Fortunately, a number of Editors' Choice-quality games drowned out that half-wit's whining, including Dungeon Keeper 2, Railroad Tycoon II, Might and Magic VII, and Need for Speed: High Stakes.



#### 10 Years Ago, October 1994

A decade has passed. and the special place in our hearts reserved for the glory of Tie Fighter still belongs to none other. The

only reason this Hall of Fame space sim got five stars was that our five-star rating system prohibited us from giving it seven. Here at CGW, we openly lament the demise of the hardcore space-combat genre and have this simple suggestion for LucasArts: Give this baby a quick graphical upgrade and make it run on Windows XP, and we'll forgive you for canceling Sam & Max.



#### 15 Years Ago. October 1989

Inside the mag, we gave SimCity our Game of the Year award, but the real face of gaming-all pouty and ruff-was

on the back-cover ad for Space Rogue. The next time your kids ask, "Were the '80s as fun as they look on those VH1 specials?" show 'em this scarf-wearing, wing-coiffed Kevin Dillon wannabe sucking in his cheeks while wearing a shoulderpadded Members Only knockoff pleather tacket and tell 'em, "No, little one, they were a terrible time. A terrible, terrible time." Then walk off muttering, "Never again."

# 100 Bucks

It's burning a hole in your pocket. Go spend it

III GONIE

#### Astonishing X-Men

VELCOMICS COM JOAR WINSTON Image lot of time on nishands now. What with the cancellation of Angellation of Angellation of Laguer, ind Firefly, Ryan was all sorts of



weepy around the office. Rest easy, siddo—the first few issues of Whedon's new comic and directly salling off store helves. Whedon's her signed up to do a seek 12 leaves of the new series, and it is leaves of the mutant wirus. Which mutants will volunteer to lose their powers to live a normal life? You gotta read on to find out.

**BMB** 

#### SCTV Network / 90 —

willow year one also was a sorry to a second on about now building the row there was a whole offnet cult classic that fell between the cracks, John Candy, Eugene Levy, and the infamous Bound Doug Mackenzile (Dave Thomas and Rick Moranis) all got their starts on this awasome show. It may not be back on the lift, but it is finally on DVD, with a bunch of extras, behind-the-scenes features, and, of course, a bunch of yucks.

Mary of the

#### The Losers: Ante Up

FID: WWW.DOCOMICS.COM

An ellie black-ops feet is more used on its CIA handler. Now it wants payback. This may sound like a revamped take on the A Team, but it's a whole lot more. In fact, to call this book a graphic novel doesn't do

Justice to what The
Losers actually
accomplishes. The err
and layout tells the
story almost as much as
the taut scripting of what
would happen if
Soderbergh's Ocean's
Eleven were poured into



HOVE

#### Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow

STOTICKET, WWW.SKYCAPTAIN.COM
Originally stated as a summer movie, we were banking on seeing Jude Law diversions into a stylish retro metropolis. We'll say it: We're still on the fence as to whether this movie will totally suck—but we're keeping our fingers crossed.
Honastly, we are hoping that the movie will borrow a whole lot from the Crimson Skies universe and style as opposed to plain of planes buzzing through cities.

COMIC

#### Rice Krispies Treats (eight bars)

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the unofficial snack food of Computer Gaming World

The crispy, tasty snacky-ness that tainted our childhoods is what gets untirough those long, painful deadline cycles. Running a close second were sun-dried caterolliars (they are for real—seriously!).

Pocket Change \$1.00



MUSI

#### X-Ecutioners, Nevroumbres

Another kind of "X-Men" also earns a spot on this month's rader. The newest CD from these NYC deelays cuts up tight tracks and serves 'em hot. Revolutions is admittedly geared more toward the mainstream non-deelay-heads, but that doesn't stop it from also being good in the process. What might throw you off as some of the offbeat collaborations (The Blue Manuschuse?) and remixes such as the White Zomble-fueled "(Even) More Human than Human," but hang in there. By the time you get to the infectious "II Bill," you'll be tching to hear it all over again.



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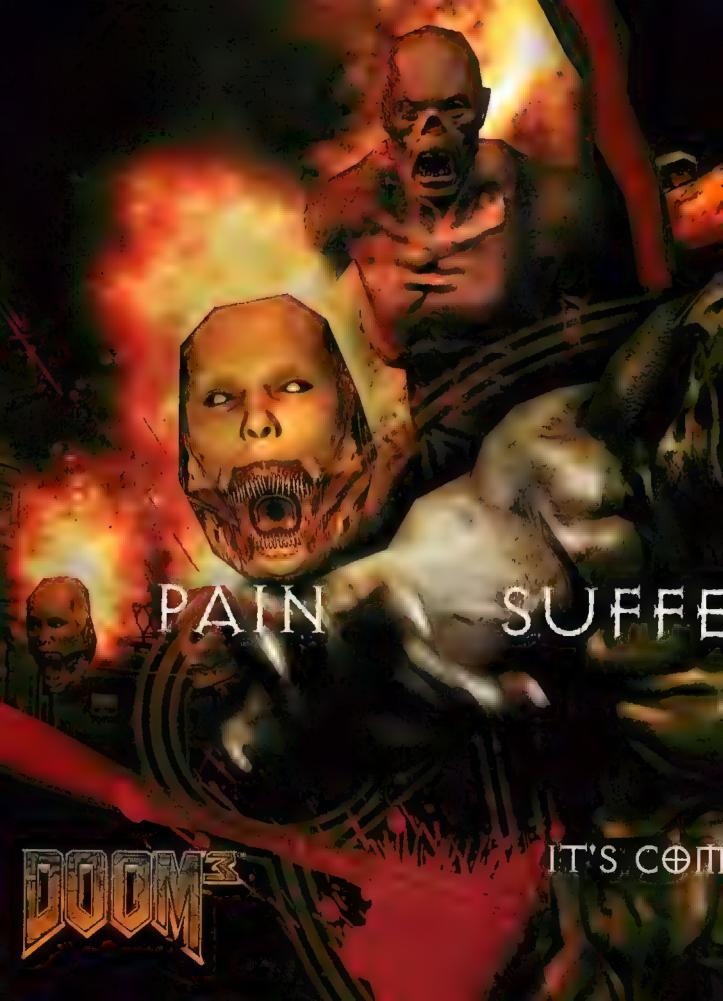
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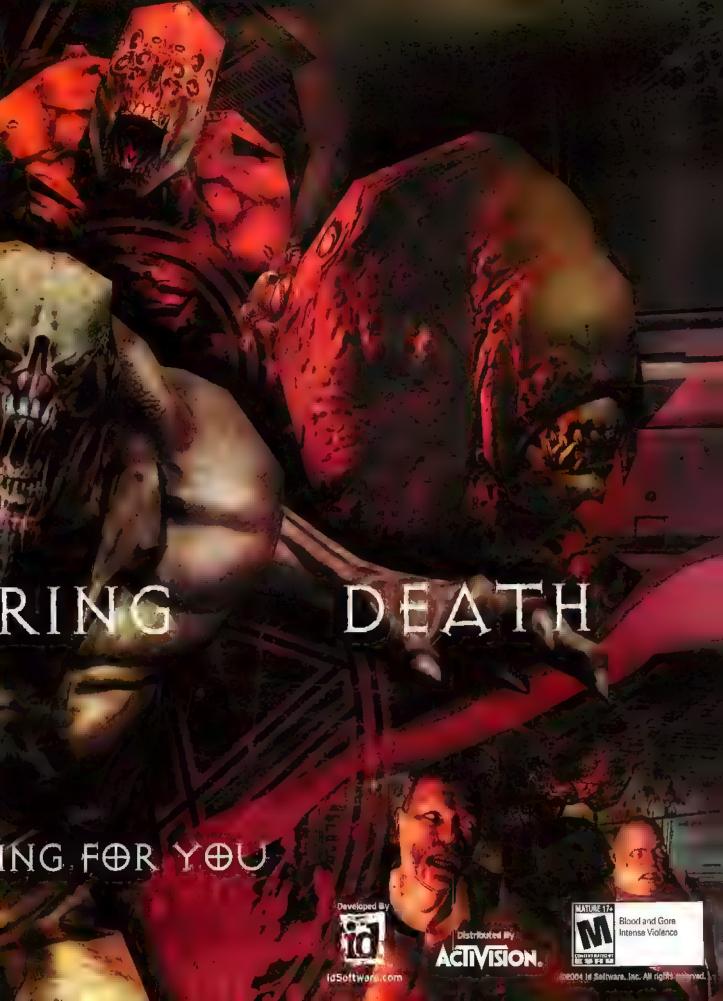
PRODUCT

cinet

Editors' Choice

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# Previews





American McGee presents this quirky free-form action game filled with a ton of robots.



The expansion to the best shooter of last year is almost here.



My Big Fat Greek strategy battle game. and the latest on the next Total War title.

NCsoft!

Cryptic Studios EN REMMO WE CASE DATE Late 2004

# issup n

Coming next issue!



The capes flow freely and realistically.

ity of Heroes has emerged as an enormous critical and commercial success. Not satisfied to lazily roll around in its newly acquired piles of money, developer Cryptic Studios plans to release significant content updates every few months. The first of these free updates-or "issues," as the team calls them-arrived at the end of June. Issue No. 2 is tentatively scheduled to go live sometime in September. Though the first issue included an impressive amount of new content, Issue No. 2 appears to be even more ambitious. According to NCsoft's Brian Clayton, "We literally have the full team working on the update."

#### The world

ssue No. 2's title, Shadow of the Past, refers to a 200-foot-tall interdimensional plunderer" called Rularuu the Ravager, who menaced Paragon City back in the roaring '60s Luckily, before his interdimensional plundering could properly commence, Ruiaruu was defeated by a group of superheroes. In an ironic coup de grâce, the heroes trapped Rularuu in an otherworld, y prison called the Shadow Shard, where he's been stewing ever since. Back in the present, experiments. by the shady Portal Corporation have opened a rift into the Shadow Shard. The end result is a huge new area outside of Paragon City, explorable by players of level 40 and above. This area is split into four different zones, with a look somewhat reminiscent of Xen from the end of Half-Life. Lots of addly shaped floating islands abound, connected by jump pads that offer coof alternatives to the traditional travel powers.

Though you won't be able to fight Rularuu himse f until a later issue, you will have to deal with his minions, includ ing purple giants known as brutes; wisps, which look like evil versions of the spindly aliens from Close Encounters of the Third Kind; big floating eyeballs called sentries, gaseous storm elementals; and tiny yet powerful versions of the brutes, cased natterlings

Less information has been revealed about the second new area, the Hollows Designed for characters from levels 5 to 15, this section of Paragon City has been devastated by several types of subterranean monsters unleashed by the Trolgang's blasting operations.

#### Caped crusaders!

Capes-which, according to NCsoft, are the single most popular player-requested feature—will finally be unveiled in Issue No. 2 We had a chance to see them in action during a visit to Cryptic's offices in San Jose, and the extra time that was spent to correctly implement them has paid off, They look terrific; the fabric blows in the wind and follows a player's movement in an utterly convincing fashion. Available to all characters at fevel 20, capes feature interior and exterior colors, a choice of several clasps.

and a variety of applicable decals

Less of a cosmetic change is the new badge system. Badges are awarded for completing various tasks, such as visiting parts of the city, defeating a certain number of a particular enemy, or even earning special combinations of other badges. Earned badges will appear as a status symbol on a character's ID card but will also confer more concrete benefits, such as permanent increases to either health or endurance

The mission system is also being enhanced. New goals, such as simultaneous objectives and escort-style challenges, are being implemented. These new missions aren't hogging the spot ght, though—the team is also going back through many of the existing missions in an effort to make them more un que.

#### The plot thickens

It's tough to find anything to complain about in an entirely free expansion pack Still, with the entire or ginal team working on updates, you may wonder who is left to work on City of Villains. Though Cryptic is still being cagey with the details, it has confirmed that the company's staff has practically doubled and that the new hires (including pen-and-paper RPG veteran David Zeb" Cook) are hard at work on the nefar ous villainy that awarts us next year 👺 Erik Wolpaw

#### Optimally primed hands-on

odd in some Repoot-style characters, fron Glant and appropriate popular insignation and pulky sense of punky and design, and you've got one unique insertion, game.

In Scrapland, you play as D-Tritus ("detritus," as in garbage), an intergalactic cobolium, artument insignation and is immediately assigned a job as a countainst. Luckly, a big story is about to oreak: For some reason, the Great Datum and control of the mobolic socie punctum still contains the owners upon death—seems to be maiowners upon death—seems to be mai-ples solvers, mean repose a langle hip-revived anymore, it's up to D-Teitus to find out why this is happening

#### Mech love and war

THE COLOR OF THE C

#### "The other candidates are all

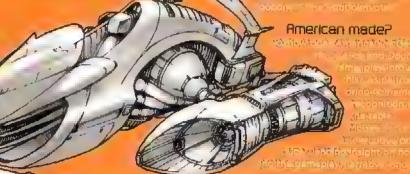
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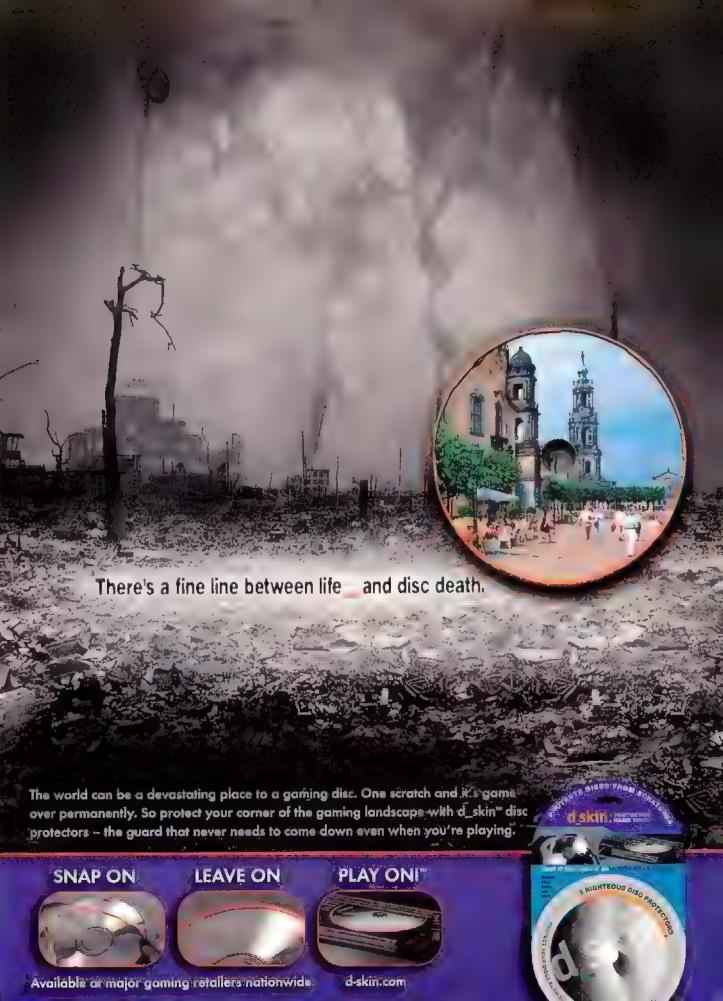


The Miles speed Private kerner

American Michael Private and the same character of the same character of the same character of the same characters. The same of the same characters are characters of the same characters of the same

The Jord MECHANIZED





Call waiting—for the sequel, that is

f you've already been drafted for the award-winning Call of Duty, then you may as well sign up for a second tour. The United Offensive expansion is almost here, and we have an in-depth hands-on of the game's late beta, Based on what we've seen (roughly a third of the game), United Offensive still feels like the one and only Call of Duty: it's a high-action cornucopia of sensory overload. There's still that thrill as you rush into battle, as well as that intangible sense of camaraderie with your NPC compatriots. This is, like its predecessor. a game of moments.

#### United we stand

United Offensive includes 13 single-player missions spread across three different campaigns: The Battle of the Bulge, the Russian invasion of Kursk, and the invasion of Sicily by the British.

Speeding through the streets of Sicily, you man the guns of a motorcycle sidecar. A nearby explosion tosses you from the bike, ending the first rail-shooter segment. As you and the driver hobble away, dizzy and confused, the onslaught of enemy

soldiers affords you no chance to calch your breath

Mortar strikes continue to rock the earth, shaking the cobblestone streets that line your getaway You "cook" a grenade, delaying your toss until the very last moment. The enemy can't kick the sucker back if it blows up in his face. Finally, your

An otherwise pleasant afternoon boating trip rained by those damn Nazis.

escape on foot takes you to the loading docks, where you speed away on a motorboat. But it doesn't end there enemy boats careen toward you in relentless pursuit

And all of this is in just one stage

#### ich bin ein multiplager

Several new modes should ignite more interest in multiplayer. For example, In domination mode, a number of points must be taken over in order to gain control of the map. Speaking of the map. strangely, an overhead view is not included

> A blatantly unbalanced jeep is among the new vehicles, complete with a chirpy honk to get your teammates' attention and taunt enemies. This jeep may be great for



Multiplayor maybem!

reaching map points, but it's easily mowed down by one of the many playable tanks. If you are the lone rider in a vehicle, you can switch smoothly from driver to gunner posts as the need arises.

With so many military-themed FPS titles heading to shelves this year, the competition will be fierce. Can an expansion pack stand up to the opposition? Whether United Offensive can fully duplicate or outdo the original experience can be determined only with the final product, but already it seems safe to say that the game will, at the very least, do no worse. 🗈 Johnny Liu

GALL WAITING

The chirpy jeep noids three passengers: driver, shotgus, and guiner.

. Tactical Military Action For Pivotal Games Co. Tactical Military Action For Pivotal Games Co. Tactical Military Action

# 

#### Attention, soldier!

we you noticed the war-game bandwagon effect? in 2002-lasticitied 1942 and Medel or fonor: Allied Asseut halped kick off liew of WWII games. Recently, the folias chifted to the Vietnam etc., spear haaded by titles like Battleffeld-Vietnam Men of Valor, and ShellShock, Nam 167 Sathering's Contract series is joining the trend, abandoning the Middle East back troplin favor of the Vietnamese jungies

#### Jungle boogle

and deeper character development
Vietnam still promises plenty of hardcore
Conformation and any one of your four squad



#### Tiger Traps

The idea sounds good on paper, and Vietnamido Espainssome Re-specific serious competition in this new era of

The Word FLASHBACK

13 THE ISSEE TO CONTINUE OF VELOPES Atomic Games STAIRS Strategy RELIAMS DATE September 2004

# iose Comidel First de Soni

#### The few, the proud

Ine U.S. milkary loves videogames. Just look! The Army has America? Army and sull Spectrum Werrior! The Navy tiat SOCOM III U.S. Navy SEALS on the 1952 And now, the Matines prelim on the lovefest with First to Fight, the next chapter (now FPS driven) is the successful Close Combat attategy series.

#### As real as it gets

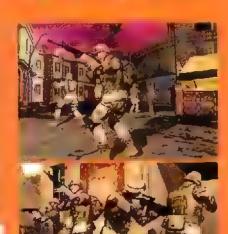
First to Fight is being created with the participation and input of several real promitive ome value ensules to une to to duty in Iraq. Re-creating "real" combat The original Close Combat strategy

#### Then again...

There are a whole let of military games competing for the same modelhare and space. Perhaps the most similar games in

The Word SEMPER FI

First to Fight is being created with the

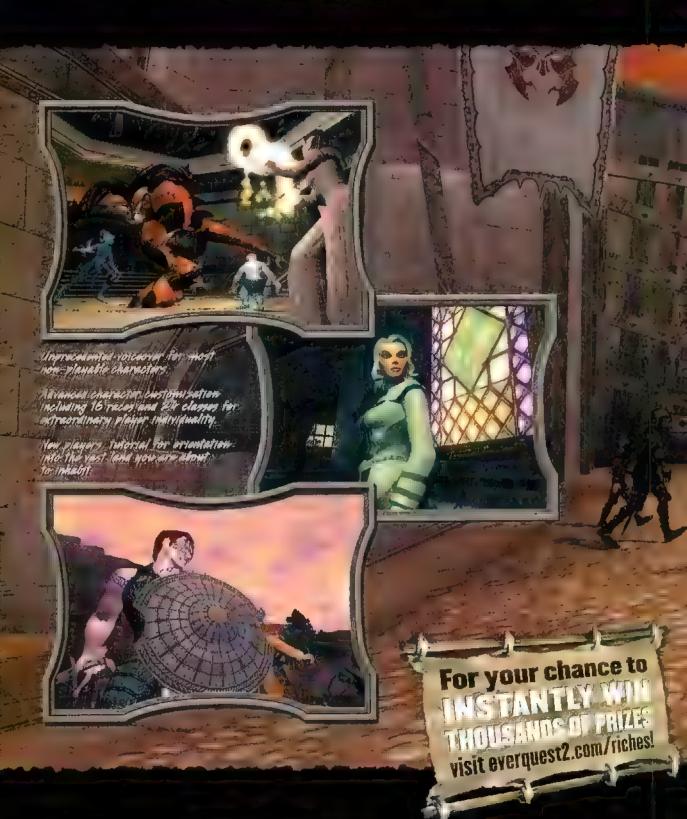




# you won't believe your eyes.









Suggestive Themes Violence

ESRII CONTENT RATING

WWW.85/B./

Came Experience May Change During On the Play AVAILABLE ON:

PE PE





# BEHOLD THE WORLD WHERE



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### ADVETTURE COTTES ALIVE.



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and adventure beyond your dreams.

COMING SOON



# EVERQUEST

WHERE ADVENTURE COMES ALIVE

#### Ship dates and slip dates for

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Anarchy Online: Allen Invasion	R , main	Resident Vivial
Armies of Exigo	1	8
Atlant's Evolution		
Auto Assar 1		
The Bard's Tale	ia a <sub>apr</sub> o	
Bott pfla d 2		
Black & White H		
BloodRayne 2		
Brothers in Arms	a a	- i →
Cal of Cthulba Dark Corners of the Earth	ŧ	
Call of Duty: United Offensiva		
C ty of Villains		ak.
Civ. gation IV		ים ד
Codensino: Panzors	•	
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nmvan	•	4
Dragon Age		
Dungdon Slage ()		•
Empire Earth 2		
EverQuest il		

Evil Gartus

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Final Fantasy XI. Chains of Promethin

DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTY OF THE

Freedom Force vs. The Third Reich

Fit Spectrum Warrior

Ghost Recon 2

Galad Wars

Ha I Life 2 #Himan 4

The incredibles

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Leisure Sult Larry Megan Com Laude

LOTR! The Battle

Maddon NFL 2005

The Matrix Online

m New? Update

이 Control Myella Media UC / CG하는 Tilted Mill)

Strategy SLI TO LAT November 2004

#### Organize like an Egyptian



Rockin' the Casbah! Rock the Casbah!

he keys to Egypt's success were organization and the religious zeal with which the people obeyed almighty Pharaoh, A stinging whip and occasional sandal to the ass helped, too. immortal Cities: Children of the Nile plays to that format as the first-ever society sim-builderwhich means you, as Pharaoh, get to command your early real digital minions.

#### Puramid scheme

Plucking elements from both The Sims and Sim City, Children of the Nile focuses not only on physically building up Egypt, but also the plight of its people. Happy people spell success! These folks go about their daily routines without direct control and unlike Sim City 4's "play with your Sims" feature. Children of the Nile allows. you to get an in-depth view of your people's daily lives and gauge their contentment. You can literally follow an Egyptian. around through the first-person-perspective option, watching his daily routine.

Quick lesson on in-game social structures, there are three social classes that allow for both lateral and vertical mobility At the bottom are lower-class peasants Craftsmen including merchants and brickmakers, comprise the middle level, and finally, the upper-class elite is made up



of nobles who own private farms and priests who act as teachers and operate the temples.

Religion plays a fundamental role in the game, as citizens go to temple during crisis situations to alleviate their depression. Temples also provide health care, mortuary services, and education. Yet ultimate success in the game comes from leaving a lasting legacy through obelisks. sphinxes, and grand pyramids.

#### What Sphinx?

Unfortunately, we're not expecting too much from Children of the Nile in the visuals. The graphics and level of detail, while decent, aren't quite at the level of other current simulation games, though hopefully the detail within the gameplay will more than compensate - Jennie Suc

The Word PLAN

Septimber 2004
 September 2004
 September 2004

# ne: Intal IIIs

#### A hands-on with Activision's new strategy epic



() These spears are an effective "offensive defense" against the charging cavalries.

he Carthaginians are hiding weapons of mass destruction—big elephants! During my hands-on time with a nearly complete Rome: Total War, I decided to destroy the evildoing Carthaginian threat once and for all.

As a torrent of my troops shoved their way through Carthage's capital city, my foe's elephants were shocked and awad by the sheer majesty of my troops. The elephants went nuts and stamped out their own men. A beaut ful cheap victory!

At that point, I ran out of money, so I decided to tax my own people to continue my invasions.

#### Lend me your ears

Activision and Creative Assembly visited the CGW office with a near-final version of the latest game in their award-winning strategy series (Medieval, the second game in the series, is being inducted into our Hall of



Fame-see page 74). While there were still some bugs to be stamped out, as would be expected. Rome, Total War feels rock solid and plays great. The controls are direct and easy to pick up, though there are still some user interface changes planned.

The single-player Historical Battles lets you play through actual historical events. like the Roman army's escape through the Teutoburg Forests. Pushing through the fog of war. Rome is suddenly surrounded by vicious rottweilers! Who let the dogs of war out? Germanic barbarian tribes, that's who. These dog units are inexpensive to generate and effective demoralizers when they use enemy troops as chew toys

#### The next Total War

Creative Assembly is already well under way with the next game in the series, thanks to an efficient simultaneous twogame development cycle (Medieval was developed using the Shogun engine, while new technology was developed for Rome and its planned follow-up). The subject matter for this next game hasn't been nailed down, but there is interest in properly revisiting the medieval era again, as well as North American history and the Napoleonic Wars. We'll bring you more details as they develop, but in the meantime, get ready for what could be the best strategy game of the year. Salohnny Llu

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Now Update		

#### 



BF ROLL Consgo/Plastic Reality Technologies AVA LADIGITY Q3 2005

#### El Matador

Word on the street: Say hello to our little friend, an intriguing new stealth-action game in which you play a DEA agent bent on bringing down a South American crime syndicate, the narkomafia. Besides crocodiles and dogs, adversaries include hyperintelligent sentries who'lt track your movements throughout an intense, nail-biting adventure that's heavy on graphic violence and cinematic clichés. Slick gadgets let you step cautiously past foes or slaughter surly civillans and psychopathic paramilitaries outright. And you thought government jobs didn't pay...

Sounds kinda boat: Jungle love worked for Morris Day and the Time, whether Czech outfit Plastic Reality Technologies can acore a hit exploiting the concept remains dublous. Far Cry set a high standard for lush and tropical environments, and if earlier in-house efforts (Korea: Forgotten Conflict and Loco-Commotion) are any benchmark of the company's capabilities, we're hardly optimistic. As is, the ship date remains many months off, so there's time for a minor miracle yet.



THROM CD Projekt AVAILAR INY 2005

#### The Witcher

Word on the street: Can't tell. Adam Sandier from Andrzej Sapkowski? Neither can most Americans. Not to worry—it won't be an issue once you sink your teeth into the gorgeous sword-and-sorcery epic based upon Sapkowski's dark fantasy works. Armchair adventurers play as a champion trained since birth to protect the public from evil beasties. Moral dilemmas, majestic backdrops, and madcap real-time skirmishes are all constructed via BioWare's Aurora engine, last seen in Neverwinter Nights

Sounds kinda beat: CD Projekt is known primarily for localizing existing titles for the Eastern European market, not original software design. Furthermore, this'll represent the first time the business has put a worldwide push behind any product—even if it is a quarity selection, the program will live or die based on worth-of-mouth support. Strong buzz or no, the package could fly well under the radar, Just look at the ungodly fate that befell *Divine Divinity* 



11 POR Master Creating AVANABLEY 2005

#### Restricted Area

Word on the street: Cross Blade Runner with Baldur's Gate. Add a dash of Dlablo and float a little Matrix-style mysticism on top. Voifà—you've got one of the most promising cyberpunk RPGs in years. As one of four characters pursuing a shared story line, participants bathe for bionic implants and engage in co-op multiplayer antics. The kicker postapocalyptic showdowns are powered by IRIS, an advanced isometric game engine primed for max mum visuals.

Sounds kinda beat: Three's company in most cases, but not always where fast-paced arcade action, intricate plotlines, and detailed statistical data are concerned. German developer Master Creating has thus far cut its teeth solely on budget titles. In addition, similarly inclined products from the same territory—Sacred, anyone?—haven't wowed audiences either. If the formula is right, we could be in for the finest futuristic RPG romp since Freelancar.

# Gary Grigsb

This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a findi note stating that unless we heard from them by eleven o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you that no such understanding has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany," -British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, 3 September 1989

#### KEY FEATURES

Four full-length scenarios (Spring 40) Summer '41, Spring '42, Summer '42) lasting to the end of the war

Over 350 areas on a sprawling world

map the Soviet Union, the Western Allies, and China) and 38 different countries Command fifteen different combat units in the air, on the land, and at sea, as well as infrastructure and supply unita

Each unit has up to 14 attributes, most of which can be improved through research and development

Rules that cover strategic movement, forts, cold weather zones, airborne attack, amphibious invasions, partisans, militia, and many other features Fog of War rules that hide enomy units and production

Supply rules that can be set to provide a common pool for all units to draw from, or the creation of field units that must accompany the armies
PBEM playability for two to five

players Challenging Al that offers a unique

gaming experience Ability to automate either or both the Production and Research functions An in-depth tutorial that smoothly integrates the player with the game

Not even one war before these words were uttered Chamberlain himself returned from Munich and uttered the words, "I believe it is peace in our time; As German panzers and aircraft poured across the border nto Roland, sliging a sovereign nation into a directible conquest, Chamberlain was forced to acquieses to the inevitable and deciare war. France followed soon after, and World War Libegan

inevitably, the mighty Axis armics eventually bit off more than they could chew, and goon were howing under the enormous pressure applied to them by the

Western Allies and the Soviet Union China, despite being at war with Japan for almost 14 years by 1945, proved to be too big a challenge for the Japanese; combined with increasing Allied pressure throughout the Pacific, the Japanese amoun followed the Germans into defeat in the summer of 1945

But with Gary Grigsby's World of War , things may turn out different. The Western Allies may be conquered by Germany, or Japan may defeat China. With you at the controls, leading the fates of nations and alliances, anything is possible in this new strategic offering from Matrix Games and a by a Gamen

head your armies to victory by honing their abilities in research and development, greating a more powerful force than any other on the planet. Bulld with foresight, however; the bigger and more expensive units take longer to build and are invested in over time rather than being an instant purchase: Players will then have to plan several game turns in advance, tailoring far-reaching strategles to fit the current strategic situation.;

Take command in this dynamic turn-based game and test strategies that long-past generals and world enders could only dream of: make it happen in. World at War.



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Viewed Medal of Honor Pacific Assault in our February 2004 issue. things were looking good for the franchise. But there was some cause for worry. Once Allied Assault was completed, much of the talent that contributed to the title's success. left EA to work on other games, including Activision's Call of Duty. That said, quite a few of the people who worked on Call of Duty have returned to EA for Pacific Assault. Considering how much we love both Allied Assault and Call of Duty, we can only believe that the return of much of the "old school" talent means Pacific Assault, like Allied Assault before it, will have us hooked for some time. And after spending a day with the Pacific Assault team, we're decidedly optimistic that the final game will return the lost glory to the Medal of Honor franchise

hen we initially pre-

#### THE OFTEN OVERSHADOWED WAR IN THE PACIFIC

According to Brady Bell, Pacific Assault's sentor producer, "We really wanted to take the game to the Pacific theater and do something different. We also wanted to push the technology and push the gamep.ay, and there are so many stories in the Pacific theater that offer unique opportunities for us to do all of these things," Brady goes on to explain "Some people thought that if we just did Allied Assault in the Pacific, that would be enough. But we wanted to do more than that. This game was going to be the most relentless. intense, authentic representation of Pacific theater WWII combat."

The folks at EA recognize that, while D



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High Market Street Street and Street and

Into the game." After hearing this



Once you take over the controls, you'll be able to wreak some havoc on the imperial navy.





After coming ashore, you'll rally with your squad before engaging the enemy. 

Pirelights in Pacific Assault will be pretty intense. Be sure not to shoot the guys with stars above them.



Assault, many of the devices previously used to immerse the player in the action had grown stale, in describing the team's new take on the series, Beil says, "In all of the Medal of Honor games, we always focused on the games being very cinematic. The danger with that is that games become very linear and scripted. It's funthe first time you go through it, but you do it again and again and you realize that there isn't that much there. The first time can be a really good time. And that was great a couple of years ago, but that's going to be the big change going forward for us-to get that same kind of cinematic experience, but in a more dynamic way, so players feel like they're causing the action to happen, regardless of where they are in the action "

Many WW I games have been criticized for being too linear, or "corridor based," as Bell puts it. An example of this is the Brecourt level in Call of Duty, in which you essentially run through a series of trenches killing any German soldier who gets in your way. This is not the case in Pacific Assault. EA showed us one of the game's levels, which takes place at the Henderson airfield on Guadalcanal, where your specific mission objectives can be met in a plethora of ways.

#### **SGT. SMARTY PANTS**

In keeping with the Medal of Honor series' attention to historical detail, gameplay in Pacific Assault will be squad based. With that in mind, EA has gone to great lengths to ensure that the A.I. in the game is...well, intelligent. Bell explains that "A.I. used to D

# JAMBATE SPORTS [NFL 2005]









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Select offensive and defesive plays from multiple options in realistic playbook



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GBAR in hand, it'll be up to you to lay down a heavy base of fire. Many of Pacific Assoult's mis missions will involve close-quarters combat. [] This corpsman (medic) doesn't carry a lot of hardware. When the fighting gets tough, you'll have to watch his back.





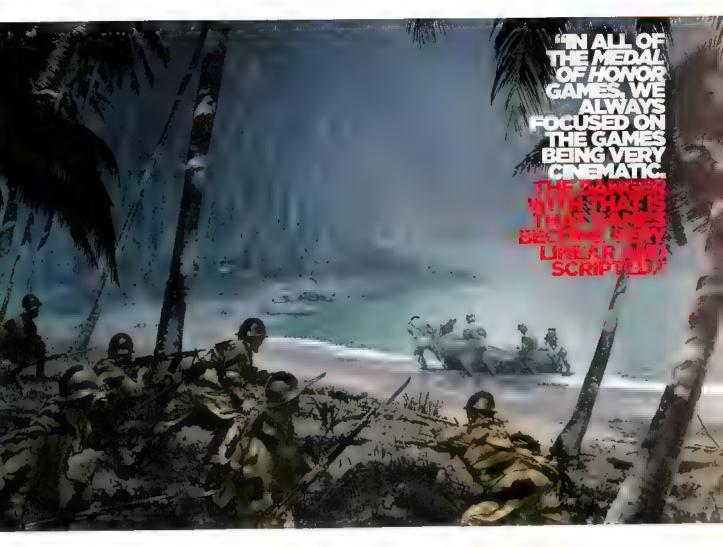
D be, you see an enemy, the enemy sees me-shoot In-Pacific Assault, it's all squad-based A.I. on both the Allied and the enemy sides," Warfare in the Pacific was about squads, teams of fewer than 10 soldiers. each one with a different role and specialty. Adds Bell, These people were afraid to get shot, and that's something we've lost with first-person shooters. In Pacific Assault, we want you, the player, to be afraid to get shot. You're free to go off and try to be Rambo, but you're gonna get your ass kicked pretty quickly." EA describes the A.I. In Pacific Assault as "pressure based." This means that depending on how well you're doing, you'll either raise or lower the morale of the other side.

help. Explains Bell, "If there's an officer in the enemy squad, he'll raily his guys, and he may choose to have them banzar if they get down to only a couple of soldiers and all hope for them is lost." I was able to play through the Henderson airfield level several times, and each time through the A.I., both enemy and Allied, behaved differently. If I played timidly, the enemy A.I. grew more aggressive and eventually overwhelmed my squad, Similarly, if I was overly aggressive, I often found myself effectively going it alone because my teammates lacked my aggressiveness

In another move to set Pacific Assault apart from other first-person shooters. the development team has decided not to litter the game with power-ups Instead of busting open crates to find health packs, you'll rely on your corpsman (the Marines' version of a medic) to flx you up. When your health is depleted in Pacific Assault, you fall down into a state that EA calls "the verge of death." where you still stand a chance of being healed by your corpsman, or you may be finished off by a Japanese soldier's bayonet thrust or boot to the face. "This introduces a new flavor into the game," says Bell. "Before, you'd fall down and the screen would just fade out. Here, you fall down and the world drains out, but you hear audio flashbacks from earlier experiences in the game." While incapacitated. we found ourselves continuing to root for our team. While you're lying there on "the verge of death," you can call for your corpsman to come and heal you. If it's safe, he should be able to. However, there will be times when your corpsman will be attempting to heal you and a Japanese soldier will pop him or sneak up and bayonet him

DEPENDING ON HOW WELL YOU'RE DOING, YOU'LL EITHER RAISE OR LOWER THE MORALE OF THE OTHER SIDE AND BASED ON THAT, THE ENEMY WILL CHOOSE TO FLANK YOU, RETREAT, OR CALL FOR HELP.





#### PACIFIC ASSAULT: PART DEUX!

The big story with Pacific Assault's multiplayer is the new invader mode, which EA hopes will offer more robust gameplay and increase players' focus on the team. The developers received a lot of feedback regarding what gamers wanted out of multiplayer, and they put this advice to good use when creating invader, which emphasizes cooperation and meeting specific ingame objectives. This class-based mode will allow players to play as an infantryman, a corpsman, an ammo technician, or a combat engineer. A game of invader entails an invading team and a defending team (up to 32 players total) competing against each other over huge maps

We played one level as Aliies tasked with

setting explosives on a series of targets while the defending Japanese fought to foil those attempts. Meaningful teamplay was central to success—only the combat engineer had explosives, so our team had to work together to ensure he stayed nice and safe. Adding to the tension was the new reinforcement pool, which is depleted each time a player respawns. Because the







Ci Your first experience with flight will be "rall ride" as you control the tall gunner in a Dauntless.





number of reinforcements is limited, players will want to avoid dying and respawning. This new feature also discourages running and gunning, and favors teams that will work together and call for a corpsman to come heal wounds. Teams can win invader matches by meeting all of the level's objectives or by depleting the other team's reinforcement pool.

#### THE AGE OF FLIGHT

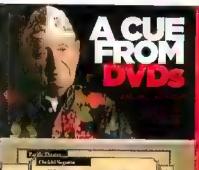
The biggest addition to Pacific Assault is the introduction of flight, WWII's Pacific theater was enormous, and naval and air power were huge factors in many battles, including Guadalcanal and Wake Island, Of course, Pacific Assault aims to be more

than just your typical WWII game. According to Bell, "Everything we've done in the Medal of Honor games that's been vehicle based (whether it's a train or a Jeop) has been a rail ride. But that's not good enough anymore." The level in which flight is introduced involves the main character hopping a ride on a Dauntless as the tail gunner. Of course, it starts out as a rail ride, but in the middle of the flight, things change and you're given the stick.

When asked about why an infantryman would know how to fly a plane, EA let us in on the backstory that explains this apparent inconsistency. After securing Henderson airfield on Guadalcanal, the protagonist, Tommy Conlin, spent months hanging out

with the pilots and learning how to fly. Of course, Bell is quick to point out that 'this is not a flight sim, but rather a fun and rewarding experience of frying around in these environments in accurate planes."

With new technology, physics based on the Havok engine, and some unique gameplay devices, Pacific Assault is set to be yet another seminal WWII-based first-person shooter.





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**PlayStation** 











With the release of Baldur's Gate in 1998, developers faced a new challenge; making a better, more memorable RPG. A year later, Black Isie Studios almost did just that It took the surreal, otherworldry

ADSD Planescape tabletop game and created one of the most unique role-playing games ever

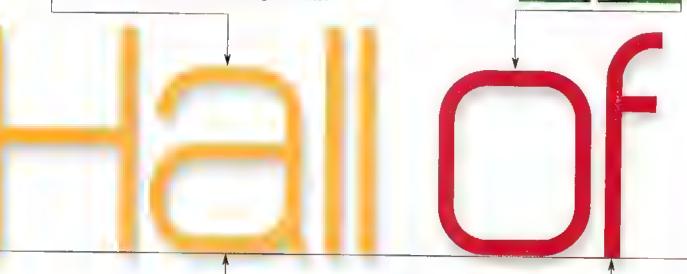
Imagine an interdimensional pit stop where you begin as a corpse on a slab. With amnesia, Think Memento with swords and sorcery. From there, you traverse the various parts of the afterlife on a quest to remember what happened to you and what your real name is. All the white, you regain "memorles" and gain skirls as you outwit opponents and perform feats. Essentially, this entire existential experience is one massive character-creation tool with an incredible story-plus, there's a wiseass taiking skull sidekick.

## John Madden NFL Football Series

Not many videogame franchises can claim the kind of dominance that the Madden NFL Football series has, Now 15 years old and with tens of millions of copies sold. Madden continues to set the bar for all other football games, and is the rare title that has managed to transcend gaming and become a bona fide lifestyle. While players have favorite iterations of the game, the fact remains that Madden just continues to get better. Whether it's with improved graph-

ics, online multiplayer for PC and consoles. or more in-depth management features. the folks at EA Sports Just keep making this thing better





#### Unreal Tournament

When cruel A.I. constructs take over the earth, we can reminisce fondly about a simpler time when bots killed humans for fun, not genocide. A beautiful yesteryear when the best PC game of the year was "unreal," in both name and description. Perhaps Unreal Tournament was part of the evil robots' master plan, setting the stage for a quick

and easy takeover Just think: Addict the humans to richly varied arenas with smooth controls. Give them an armory of cleverly balanced dual-firing weapons, so they think they have some chance at resistance, Finally, get them accustomed to the viciously clever bots that will ultimately usurp them.

Evil future robots that will put us in pink fleshy pods and mine us for robot juice-we salute you!





## Medieval: Total War

Like the famous Bayeux Tapestry, Medieval: Total War is a deft portrayal of ambit on and war, but also an illustriously woven empire-building and rea -time-strategy game

of epic scale. The tumultuous and violent Middle Ages serve as an extremely detailed historical backdrop-so much so, history teachers could use Medieval as a teaching aid. With an arsenal of single-player campaigns, historical battles, deep yet accessible tech trees, and playable factions, Medieval offers the content of at least two games packed into just one. Victory can be achieved through battle, diplomacy, economics, glorious achievements, or any combination thereof, and there's the considerable added challenge (and enjoyment) provided by a sweeping and graphically indusgent real-time combat model that miraculously manages to be both authentic and extremely compelling. With its scope, depth, and tremendous replay value. Medieval: Total War may be the perfect historical strategy game.



#### Richard Garriott and Jon Van Caneghem

It is unlikely that we will ever again see game designers whose individual achievements are as all-encompassing, influential, and visionary as Richard Garnott's and Jon Van Caneghem's Though their careers are completely separate, there are interesting parallels between these two. Each started a humble, one-man operation making a rudimentary role-playing game, and each transformed that first title into a dynasty, selling millions of games and spawning hugely successful companies. Garriott's Origin Systems

and Van Canegnem's New World Computing

Garriott created his first game, Akalabeth, in 1979 while still o high-school senior. He made the entire product himself, stuck the games in ziplock bags, and sold them himself. A year later, he made Ultima I and forever altered the landscape of PC gaming Arquably the greatest RPG series ever made, the Ultima games

went on to win award after award (and four spots in our Hall of Fame) and eventually spawned the watershed, revolutionary Ultima Online, the first successful MMORPG ever released.

Van Caneghem's story is similar. He made Might and Magic in his apartment in 1986, single-handedly creating a universe that would play out over a series of hugely popular RPGs. These

games begat the awesome Heroes of Might and Magic strategy ser es, still the benchmark by which all fantasy strategy games are judged

Now, ironically, with both their companies dead and gone, Garriott and Van Canegherr find themselves at NCsoftthe red-hot publisher of City of Heroes. Ne ther of these remarkable creators has anything to prove-but we sure are glad they're back in the game.



### IECGWHALLOFF

#### PEOPLE

Dani Bunten Berry, Game Designer John Carmack, hoganiser Ron Gilbert, Pregrammer, Game Designer Sid Meier, Game Designer Roberta Williams, Game Designer Will Wright, Game Designer.

Alone in the Dark (I-Motion, 1992) Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Armn (Interplay, 2001) The Bard's Tale (EA 1985) Battle Chass (Interplay, 1988) Battleground series (MonSoft; (Victorial) Betrayal at Krondor (Dynamic, 1993) Chesanaster (Software Toolwooks, 1996) Civilization (HigoProse, 1991)

(Virgin/Westwood Studios, 1995) Counter-Strike (Hol, 1999) Crusader: No Remorse (Dilgin, 1995). Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight (LucasArts, 1999)

Command & Conquer

Day of the Tentacle (lucasais, 1993) Diable (Birzard, 1997) Doom (ld Soltware, 1995) Dungeon Master (FIL Software, 1967)

Earl Weaver Baseball (EA, 1986). Emplife (Interstel, 1978)

EverQuest (Sony Online, 1999) F-19 Stealth Fighter (MkmProse, 1988) Falcon 3.0 (Spectrum HoloByte, 1991)

Fallout (Interplay, 1997) Front Page Sports: Football Pro (Dynamic, 1995)

Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within (Sierra, 1996)

**Gettysburg: The** Turning Point (SS, 1996) Grim Fandango (lucalis) Gunship (MicroProse, 1986) Half-Life (Valve Software, 1999) Harpoon (360 Pacific, 1989)

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King's Guest V (Sera On-Line, 1990) Lemmings (Psygnosis, 1991) Links 386 Pro (Arress Software, 1992) M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroPrese, 1989) Master of Magic (MkreProse, 1994) Master of Orion (MicroProse, 1993). Much Brigade (SSI, 1985) MechWarrior 2 (Atlivision, 1995): Might and Magic (New World Computing, 1986) M.U.L.E. (EA, 1983) Myth (Bungle, 1997) Panzer General (SS), 1994) Pirates (HickPaie, 1987) Quake (d Sofiware, 1996) Rallroad Tycoon (MittoPrise, 1990) Red Baron (Dynamk, 1990) The Secret of Monkey Island (LucasArts, 1990) SimCity (Maxis, 1987) The Sims (Maxis, 2000) StarCraft (Bizzard, 1998)

Starflight (EA, 1996)

Kampfgruppe (55, 1985)

Tetris (Specium HoloByle, 1988) Their Finest Hour (LicasArts, 1989): TIE Fighter (was/rs, 1994) Tomb Raider (Edos, 1996) Wittimm III (Origin Systems, 1983) Ultima IV (Origin Systems, 1985) Ultima VI (Origin Systems, 1990) Ultima Underworld (Origin Systems, 1992) War in Russia (SS, 1994) WarCraft II (Bäzzaid, 1996) Wasteland (Meplay, 1916) Wing Commander (Digin System, 1990): Wing Commander II. (Origin Systems, 1990) Wing Commander III (Origin Systems, 1994) Wizardry (Sr-Tech, 1981). Wolfenstein 3D (ld Soltware, 1992) X-COM (MicroProse, 1994) You Don't Know Jack (Berkeley) Systems, 1996) **Zork** (Infocom, 1981)

System Shock 2 (Detroit Att. 1999)





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# 100m3

Like a bat outta, well, you know...





t's the second game and still no Major Tom. What's up with that?



First Painkiller and now this-Dreamcatcher Games Is on a serious roll.



it's no fun to play, but it's so fun to say! Soldner, Soldner, yay!



spent, but I'm done playing the most intense experience in gaming. While I'm not a big fan

of being locked in a dark Altered States-like room at Activision's offices to prevent game piracy, it was worth the offert just to have bragging rights for playing Id's newest creation early. Yes, Doom 3 is finally here, so let's get to the big question first: is it as good as all the hype would have you believe?

#### Hell, yest

Doom 3 is more than just one of the best games of 2004-it's also better than this summer's spate of action movies. OK, so the plot isn't a big surprise to anyone at this point (a lone marine has to fight off an invasion from heli), It's the execution that makes this game so damn good. The stellar visuals, amazing audio and incredible attention to detail draw you into another world

Just take the beginning of the game as you arrive at a busting Martian research facility. The base is open for business, and you can see a whole lot if you choose to explore, People are wandering halfs, informational videos are playing, and true to form there are plenty of secret things to find

Remember the three F's: F5 (quicksave), flashlight, and fire!

(anyone up for a round of Super Turbo Turkey Puncher 3?), As the game progresses, the story advances

e-mails, and video clips that slowly tease you with as much backstory as you

The plasma rifle and shotgun are effective at shooting down incoming missiles.

want to sift through. The first level eases you gradually into the game mechanics, teaching you the basics in a fashion similar to the one the original Half-Life used back in the day. Kick start the action as soon as you think you're ready by reporting in for duty. Brace yourself.

#### Jumping at shadows The next 20-some-odd hours will

have you constantly on the razor's edge-kind of like the classic horror-movie scene in which there's a sudden musical spike and a cat leaps from the closet (you jumped at those, admit it). All of Doom 3 is goosed with similar moments. You'll be wandering darkened hallways armed with a flash light. You spin around to a hiss, but it's only some hydraulic machinery grinding away. Can a human being sustain that kind of heightened paranola for hours at a time? It wasn't pretty, but I did. Let's just say that you need to go slow and steady through each level. Running and gunning outside of multiplayer, will just get your damn fool self killed right quick

Graphic details like volumetric shadows (some dand fied, fancy-boy term for the dark) provide only half of the tension. The





#### QUICK TIP!

Learn the distinctive sounds of each demon and LISTEN!

audio is an as big, if not bigger star than the zombies However, you really do need a 5.1 surround sys-

tem to play. Togging between speakers and stereo headphones, I found a lot was lost in translation,

I also ran into a small audio hitch while playing, a new phenomenon in games that rely on in-game 5.1 surround sound: audio overlap, imagine you have one guy standing to your immediate left and talking into one ear while two guys are talking across the room and a television is playing at the same time. It may sound simple, but all the audio has to be intelligently spaced around the room. I could only re-create this problem once at the very beginning of the game, but Thief: Deadly Shadows had this exact problem as well

#### Scary good

So as we've established by now, you will Jump back. A lot. Even if you've played through an area before, even if you know where all the demons are, you will still be jolted because ld's craftsmen did such a

#### **QUICK TIP**

Get a surroundsound speaker set: you lose a serious advantage in stereo mode,

careful job orchestrating your claustrophobla, Yes, we may be a little jaded on scripted sequences





guiding the action, but this three-ring circus of adrenaune and fear elevates gaming as an art form and puls it on par with Hollywood. All the event triggers are strategically placed and add that extra bit of fear just when you thought you were safe

Another way the game Immerses you is with interactive devices. That's right, the days of using red and blue keys to advance are long gone. It's now a world of utilizing security codes and fetching various components to get gear up and running again.

Turn off lights. operate machinery download informationthere's a lot to do here. But this immersion also lets you chaase

#### QUESTION

Why are there chain saws on Mars? Someone at FedEx screwed up a shipment-they needed lackhammers.

some courses through the game. An example: At one juncture, you can opt for either jumping puzzles or some seriously hairy firefights to advance. There are other choice turning points but, unfortunately, they have no direct effect on the ending. You're steered to one very cool but inevitable conclusion in hell and the archeological dig site of an ancient Martian civilization

#### in a locked box

Obviously, there is a price to be paid for all this: a new computer. If you're still getting by on Windows 98, upgrade (it only works for Windows 2000 and XP), if you've got a machine with less than 384MB RAM, upgrade if you don't have a 5.1 speaker kit, buy one quick. You'll need it all if you hope to get the game looking as good and running as well as we did (in Activision's offices, we played on a 3GHz Del with IGB RAM, GeForce 6800 GPU, and a Logitech Z-680 5.1 speaker kit). There is one thing you should know. though. While we played the game at various detail levels and resolution settings, we decided to show you what the game looks like at 800x600 pixel resolution. We aren't kidding; all our screenshots were taken at 800x600. The crazy part is that there is an "ultimate" graphics setting that machines aren't even ready for yet and won't be able to support until the next generation of graphics cards come out

So, with the game done and review written, I can finally rest easy for a few seconds. Sure, there were a few nitpicky points, but that won't stop anybody from enjoying this game one lots. Doom 3 blow my mind and messed with my precious sleep patterns for two days straight. Give me a week and I'll be ready to play it again. Now that Id has grabbed back the FPS crown, we say, "Hail to the king, baby!" Darren Gladstone

Verdict \*\*\*\* This is one hell of a ride!

MULTIPLAYER SMACKDOWN HOMEN COFFEY! DARBEN GLABSTONE or fragging each 101010111 JOHNNY LNO. MANDLE: El Sonior Muerte matches on HARSTEN SALVATORE the five maps that hip with the pame blay last man standing, tournal Parren underest adius, A string of the ring out, Granade connected invisibility bower-up and team deathm t nines that from coming in last place less-it would be a straight-up free! r-all fight to the death, Let's Cul POUND FOUR FACE 2 and Lights US the action, which is alread. perome Robert's nunting ground DN 2 You'd tigure parren would ve a commanding lead since he just powered through the single-player niding in spadows and boung pame, but he's having a shaky start. Hi las to remember that multiplayer is a ou least expect Faster paced, Where the single player mode has an adrenaine meter most more a filefully a from some hat limits you, there is no speed limit mensiv hairy chain-gun imetights in Delta Labs we makeshift boxing match. Kristen took Johnny in the best ners. Still, he manages to buil ahead or

Reactor map thanks to locating the

nerserker neimet and screaming ni vay to an early wini

he hall behind him, but Darren see

he ploy, knov coming, and

en.

ormance was nitch free. Johnny par

irst to frag and get fragged in Doom .

FINAL SCORE? Well

S . Je ...



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DRIEAM ATCHER

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PUBLISHER Wivendi Universal OFVELOPER Massive Entertainment GENRE RTS ESRB AATING TREGURED Pentium III 800, 128MB RAM, 1.568 Install, 32MB videocard RECOMMENDED: Pentium 4 1.5GHz, 256MB RAM, 128MB videocard MULTIPLAY ... Internet, LAN (2-8 players)

## Ground Control II

#### **Destruction without distractions**



he story is typical. It's 700 years into the future, and there's a war between the freedom-loving peoples of the Northern Star Alliance and the oppressive Terran Empire. As a captain in the NSA, you must lead your small group of troops against overwhelming odds to defeat an alien threat and save the world.

The gameplay, however, is anything but typical, Ground Control II focuses solely on destruction and mayhem, without the usual distractions of resource management. Tactics, timing, and react on speedrather than economic savvy-are the primary contributors to success.

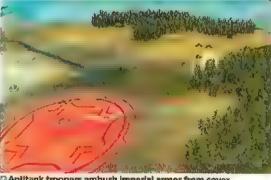
#### Alphabet soup

Battles in GC2 are usually focused around a couple of acronyms; VLs (victory locations) and LZs (landing zones). VLs are strategic spots that you must capture and hold to win a scenario; they also provide APs (acquisition points) with which to purchase reinforcements. When you acquire troops, they arrive by dropship on your LZs. If you lose your LZs, you're stuck until you can retake one

Your dropship and APs are all the resource management there is, GC2 encourages thrift with your troops and I mits how quickly your APs accrue: The more troops you've deployed the fewer APs you get. You can also use your APs to upgrade your dropship by giving it more armor, weapons, speed, fuel, or cargo capacity. Speed affects how quickly the dropship moves from your off-map bases to the battlefield. When upgraded

with weapons and armor, the dropship is a very powerful weapons platform.

Once you join the battle, there are many tactical tidbits to consider. Infantry can take cover in both forests and buildings for defensive advantages, units on higher ground have bonuses against those below, and even armor is more vulnerable in the sides, making flanking attacks more effective. Units also have a secondary mode that changes their capabilities: NSA assault troopers, for example, can gain antitank



Antitank troopers ambush imperial armor from cover.

abilities, though this causes them to become stationary. As your units rack up kills, they gain experience, increase in level, and perform more efficiently.

#### Combined arms

GC2 requires good combined arms tactics for success. Infantry are very good at holding terrain such as buildings or forests, and heavily armored units rule the plains. Air units can easily destroy armored juggernauts unless they're ade-



rocket launchers. Most of the game's strategy involves figuring out what kind of force mix works best with each scenario

All this attention to tactical detail acids up to a game that's both nuanced and fast paced. Freed from worrying about resources, players can concentrate on bold Fanking maneuvers, stubborn fighting with grawals, and all the other actions that make an armchair general's heart go pitter-patter.

#### Good, bad, beautiful

The presentation is as strong as the gameplay, with big explosions and richly detailed units. Even the cinematics and voice acting are not intolerably cheesy. The web-paced 24-mission single-player campaign is divided into two segments and offers a variety of missions, including beach assaults, desperate defenses, and stealthy infiltrations. The A.I. is crafty: it knows enough to attack where you're weak and circle around your flanks to take lightly guarded positions.

The multiplayer portion of GC2, allowing up to eight players, is equally good. It offers co-op and competitive games, but these are sadly limited to just 10 maps and suffer from the occasional bit of extreme lag-

A few interface problems mar the game The camera angle can be awkward, and controlling large numbers of troops simultaneously is difficult since you cannot select more than 16 units at once. The control

problems are exacerbated by the micromanagement necessary for determining a unit's mode of operation, it'd have been nice if the A.I. could figure out when to use its antiarmor or antipersonnel capab lities. instead of requiring you to jump around the map telling all your units individually. These problems aren't horrible in small skirmishes or most multiplayer games but can lead to frustration in some of the larger and more d fficult single-player battles.

Parts of GC2 are too frustrating, and there's a little too much micromanagement involved, but everything signed enough that you can easily forgive the faults. Strategists tired of mining gold and whipping peons into shape should consider Ground Control # strongly recommended BDi Luo

#### Verdict ★★★★☆

A beautiful RTS with solid single- and multiplayer gameplay. What more can you ask for?

Players can concentrate on bold flanking maneuvers and all the other actions that make an armchair general's heart go pitter-patter.

#### **Both Sides Now**

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. PUISHER The Adventure Company . . . . . . OPER Lexis-Numerique CENRS Adventure/Puzzle SSEP FATING MINICULINED Pentium H 333, 128MB RAM, 665MB Install, Internet connection RECOMMENDED None | CuttiPutyER None

## Missina

#### More effective than the back of a milk carton

f the lives of Jack Lorski and Karen Gijman rested solely in my hands, they'd both be long dead. That's not a comment on the quality of Missing. The game is, in fact, top-notch and a steal at 20 bucks. Their untimely demise is directly related to my mental meltdown from playing this taut psychological thriller that can be best described as SeZen fused with The Da Vinci Code and a betterthought-out version of EA Games' Malestic.

#### Tangled web

There's a very thin veil separating reality from the game world. Jack and Karen have been abducted. Weeks later a CD-ROM appears at the SKL Network. That disc, the play disc you're popping into your PC, is the key to finding them, but it's your e-mail client, Internet connection, and brain that will be taxed as you try to track down the truth behind the killer's "The Great Work"

As with all twisted madmen obsessing over the arcane, you play by his rulespass a series of tests to earn more intricate challenges. The tasks you face fall into three different categories logic research, and coordination

The logic puzzles sometimes require a little trial and error. The necessary research truly tests your Google kung Iu and comprises a huge part of Missing. The real trick becomes sifting out those kernels of information on the Web. You get a few hints from the CD, but you have to go fish no on

## Surprisingly welldone footage helps set the mood for darker things later in the game.



Get ready to hit the internet to do researcha LOT of research.



Oif you thought watching home movies was fun. walt until you dissect one nine ways from Sunday.

websites both real and created solely for the purpose of this game. Sometimes the answers will be right in front of your face: others will have you digging deep just to find out someone's first name. But as you're doing all this research online, you're uncovering the mystery, feeling like you're truly a part of it

If you're stumped, the game tracks your progress and e-malls you story line updates and hints for solving puzzles, It's great for helping the story along, but my test Hotmail account didn't seem to agree Filters identified messages as spam. So brace yourself for having to learn about cheap Viagra pills while playing Missing

#### Smashingiy good

The coordination minigames, by comparison, were sometimes fun and sometimes. keyboard-smashingly frustrating (literallywe're still looking for Darren's F12 key -Ed ). At least all these elements were mixed up so as to not make you feel like you're trudging through different flavors of the same damn puzzle. Solve one or two and you get rewarded with video footage. This surprisingly well-done footage helps set the mood for darker things later in the game, as does the great music.



GEach puzzle begins with a hint from The Phoenix, which tenses out a little bit more of the story.

#### Spoller alert

After all the buildup, puzzles, and some interesting twists, the game quickly went from downright amazing to just all right The tension rises up until the very end, when you have to-wait for it-read some e-mail Seriously, the end of the game is Interally mailed in. At least the developers left an opening for the inevitable sequel. where they can make up for it. Are the puzzles still fun? Yes, and definitely worth playing through once. 2 Damen Gladstone

#### Verdict \*\*\*

The only thing missing from this great. innovative puzzle game: an ending.

## The Suffering

#### Exit light, enter night...

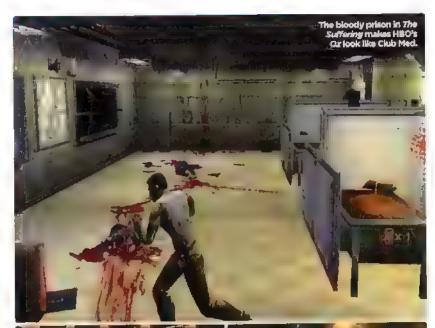
ith the PC release of The Suffering, desktop gamers who shun those (seemingly) simplistic console crossovers may need to reexamine their biases. A macabre action-adventure previously haunting Xbox and PlayStation 2, The Suffering is proof that console gaming possesses a creative energy all its own-a sense of ambience and design unaffected by the legacy of PC classicism. Although the game is a retelling of many unsubtle puip clichés, including horror flicks, prison movies, and themes of redemption versus damnation. The Suffering manages to be an entertaining and downright unnerving ride into the mouth of madness.

#### Prison break

The story hits the proverbial fan when you, a convicted killer named Torque, are transferred to a maximum-security slammer for slaving your wife and child. Within minutes of your arrival, the entire building is rocked by what appears to be not just an ordinary earthquake, but an earthquake that conveniently blows the doors off hell and unleashes its unsavory spawn. After watching a gruesome massacre of both inmates and guards, you escape from your cell, find a shiv, and take your first steps on the road to perdition

Even though story intricacy Isn't The Suffering's main strength, players will find themselves glued to the game as its intersecting narratives—one focuses on the events at hand, while the other divulges dark secrets about Torque's past via flashbacks-peel back layer by layer. What also gives the story urgency is the fact that your actions throughout the game ultimate y determine whether Torque himself signify or innocent of his crimes. Sure, these deeds often come down to binary choices ("Gee, should I pop this guy...or not?"), but the fact that your behavior

The Suffering manages to be an entertaining and downright unnerving ride into the mouth of





Con't worry too much about the guards they're busy having their torses exploded.



dictates either a Hollywood conclusion or a darker director's-cut ending gives The Suffering an immersiveness you just don't get with action affairs like Max Payne

#### Hard time

But, ike Rockstar's noir shooter senes, The Suffering plays-sans bullet time, of course—like a conventional first- or thirdperson shooter, replete with all the predictable staples of the genre. Weapons come in your standard shades of pistols, shotguns, machine guns, and grenades, in terms of an action game, The Suffering feels remarkably unremarkable. However, thanks to careful design, the game is nicely balanced between moments of explosive violence and chilling periods of dead calm-each element accentuating the other

Unfortunately, those of you coming off visual highs such as Far Cry and UT2004 may find little here to feed the eyes. The Suffering may have looked passable on the Xbox eight months ago, but now, it simply looks fugly on any midlevel machine. Yet, amazing y enough, The Suffering manages to deliver an uppercut of suspense and fright, simply because the game takes itself so seriously at all times. In fact, the viba is so prevalent with evil and perversion that you may find yourself running for natural sunlight. Fans of Clive Barker and a four-letter word starting with "f" need look no further for a dirty fix, & Che Chou

#### Verdict \*\*\*

A fairly standard action game redeemed by some true suspense and fear.

JAMES JOWOOD Productions DEVELOPER, Wings GENER Shooter ESRB RATING TRECK . Fontum 4 1.4GHz, 256MB RAM, 32MB videocard, 1GB install RECOMMENDED Pentium 4 2GHz, 512MB RAM, 64MB videocord, broadband connection Music (2-18), LAN (2-32)

## Soldner: Secret Wars

#### Some secrets are meant to be kept

n my first Soldner mission, I stealthily drove to the perimeter of an enemy camp, belly-crawled to within snipling distance, and picked off guards before planting explosives on a fuel tank to complete my task. I soon discovered that a quicker way to meet my goals was to hop in a jeep, head straight for my destination, and tear-ass around the enemy's base a few times. With freakish regularity, my computer-controlled opponents would blow up whatever or whomever I was after as I circled around them. Hostage-rescue missions required a somewhat different strategy-rolling up in a tank and blasting everything in sightbut again, stealth was not needed.

#### Too many choices

It's clear that Soldner's single-player game is something of an afterthought and that JoWood's focus is on the game's multiplayer component. And upon first glance, multiplayer seems to offer a lot There are eight multiplayer modes and dozens of weapons, vehicles, and pieces of equipment to choose from, All these choices, however, end up being one of the game's weaknesses. When faced with deciding which of 19 different rifles (and more weapons are being added regularly) is best for a quick deathmatch round and nothing but names and prices to base my choice on, I go by the tried-and-true method of picking the weapon that looks the most lethal. True, the game's website (soldner.jowood.com) provides detailed descriptions of every item available, but having this information pop up as you scroll through your choices would be



Through the scope of one of Soldner's 10,000 weapons.

#### You never quite get past the feeling that there are a half-dozen better shooters you could be playing.

more useful.

Since the game lacks a training mode, there's no way to try out different weapons prior to purchase, and the game's myriad aircraft present an even greater challengeyou'll find yourself ditching a lot of heli-

copters before getting the hang of the finicky control system (or, more I kely simply choosing to travel by land) And the driving physics in and based vehicles presents its own problems: My jeep once rode partway up a tree while a tank sometimes had problems maneuvering over small obstacles.

#### Alone again. naturallū

review patched games. however, to play Soldner online required a patch

This fixed 40-plus issues, including desktop crashes and coilision detection, but certainly not all of the game's problems. Perhaps because of these bugs, your mercenary is apt to be a lonely hunter on a lot of the multiplayer maps—at prime gamino times many maps hold just one or two other players. That said, you can have a pretty good time on some of the online battlefields, but you never guite get past the feeling that there are a half-dozen other shootors with better graphics, damage effects. and physics that you could be playing. With Joint Ops already out and Battlefield 2 on the way, JoWood may have felt pressured to get this product out the door, but it's unlikely that many people will stick with Soldner for long since there are so many superior online shooters available—and more on the way M Tom Edwards

#### As a rule, CGW does not Verdict \*\*/\data\_info

There's just no reason to play a shooter with this many problems.



PUBL SHER The Adventure Company LaveLCPLR Streke Graphics GENRE Adventure SSRB RATING E RECURRED Pentium III 800, 64MB RAM, 32MB videocard, 1.8GB install production 128MB RAM, 2.4GB install PUBLISH INSTALL PLAYER None

## Aura: Fate of the Ages

#### No brain, no gain

he substance that Aura: Fate of the Ages radiates isn't difficult to identify; the game is enveloped in a distinctive Myst. Aura presents some beautiful prerendered backdrops reminiscent of those found in that famous series, and it also contains a similar collection of mechanical and pattern-recognition puzzles. It adds nothing new to the adventure genre, but its gameplay is mostly enjoyable anyway. As usual in these "find the magical artifacts before an eyildoor gets his hands on them" excursions, there are numerous glowing machines that must be activated before important items can be unearthed. Aura's puzzles range in difficulty, but hints for some of the tougher ones can be found in either the automatically updated notebook or right in the landscapes, making life easier. For example, repairing an old mill requires energizing three battery-driven devices, and hints on getting those devices to spin correctly are painted on some nearby tins.

The puzzles are pleasant and fair, with a couple of possible exceptions. There are four worlds to explore—unless you're tone

deaf, in which case the game ends in the third world with a puzzte involving musical pipes and tuning forks. A different puzzle in the second world could also be a killjoy; it involves four columns of circles that have to be adjusted on a device to trigger a bridge to form. Only one column at a time can be seen, and the rest rotate around the inside of the device. Each of the circles has four symbols on it, for a total of 64 symbols that have to be alligned into one continuous pattern. Needless to say, by the

time you activate said bridge, your great est wish may be to jump off it, and if you can complete the puzzle without a walk-through, you should apply for a job as a cryptographer for the FBI. Some of Aura's other puzzles are a bit bizarre, but they do contain interesting components, like a collection of glowing langs. You can get killed only in one area, and Aura presents an interesting situation there, too, as you get attacked by unruly Amazons.

A couple of desktop crashes, a weak plot,



© It's hard enough just trying to figure out what's required in this musical puzzle. Never mind actually solving it if you're not musically inclined.

and those two potentially aggravating conundrums do mar what otherwise could have been a stronger game. Still, Aura. Fate of the Ages exudes a respectable glow with its plethora of thought-provoking puzzles and elegant graphics. © Denice Cook.

#### Verdict \*\*\*

MIT could use a few of this game's puzzles as its early admissions test, but Aura's still enjoyable overall.



M. H. DreamCatcher ( C. R. OFFI 3000AD CENSER Universe Simulator ENRB RATING TREQUIRED Pentium III 16Hz, 128MB RAM, 16B Install, 32MB videocard RE JONNESTIDED Pentium 4 17GHz, 256MB RAM, 64MB videocard MULT PLAYER LAN, Internet (2-64 players)

## Universal Combat

#### Burden of dreams

n 1982, maverick German director Werner Herzog released a film called Fitzcarraido, which detailed a 19th-century robber baron's attempt to drag a riverboat over a mountain in the Peruvian jungle. A documentary on the making of this movie came out the same year. It revealed that Herzog, rather than relying on special effects, had actually dragged a real boat over a real mountain in a real jungle in the real Peru-and in the process, drove himself and everyone around him insane. The minor tragedy of the whole episode is that the documentary is a lot more entertaining than the ponderous film.

Such has been the case with the longrunning Battlecruiser series of space sims The very public lawsuits, countersuits, cease-and-desist orders, heated debates. stalkers, tantrums, threats of physical violence, and general miasma of controversy that surrounds the series' visionary creator Dr. Derek Smart, have been more thrilling than any of the rickety, awkward games that resulted from his decade-long obsession with creating the ultimate space-combat simulator. The good news is that with the fifth entry in the series, Universal Combat, Smart has made a game that's closer than ever to being almost as interesting as the drama that surrounds it. The bad news is that it still isn't very good.

#### in the year 3000...

For the uninitiated, Universal Combat. simulates the year 3000. Not any particular part of the era, like, say, the blowing up the Death Star part, but pretty much the whole thing. It plops you down in the middle of the universe, gives you access to more than 100 vehicles-including spaceships, jeeps, tanks, submarines, ships, and jets-and lets you do more or less whatever you want. That is, assuming you take the time to learn the absurdly complex interface. It's hugely ambit ous in scope but unpolished in its many, many details

Gaining basic knowledge of the controls should occupy the average person for anger than it takes to finish Max Payne To get you started, there's a 100-page printed manual, a 200-page downloadable appendix, and an 80-page downloadable tutorial. Every key on the keyboard is used for something. Twice There's an undeniable nerd satisfaction



13 The TLD in action! Or maybe it's the LTD. Or the TTD. Anyway, that's definitely the TDD there in

that comes from mastering the interface. but once you accomplish this task, the game itself doesn't work very hard to reward you for your efforts. Expect lots of aimless wandering and long periods of tedium punctuated by visually unimpressive combat

With its daunting interface, an over-thetop fixation on the most trivial details of starship control, and a general disregard for any kind of satisfying, flashy production values, Universal Combat goes beyond simply targeting the average starship-compat enthusiast. This is a game designed for people whose routine space fantasies at some point turned the corner into actual fetishism. Not that there's anything wrong with that, if you've enjoyed previous installments of the series, this is a bargain-priced (selling for \$19.95) incremental advancement on everything you already like. For anyone who doesn't share Dr. Smart's very specific obsessions, however, Universal Combat is an exhausting, impenetrable bore. El Erik Wolpaw



An ambitious but ponderous chore.









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JEG STER Vivendi Universal DEVELOPER Konami CENTRE Accade/Action Soccer FIRB RATING EREQUIRED Pentium III 800, 128MB RAM, 64MB videocard, 640MB Install FETOMMENDED: Pentium 4 1.4GHz, 255MB RAM, 128MB videocard, 1.2GB Install Mult TIPL ALED Hotseat (2-4 players)

## World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 International

#### Real football finally comes to the PC



While console gamers have had the luxury of playing Konami's soccer games in various forms. PC gamers have really only had EA's licensing juggernaut FIFA

series if they wanted to play a full-onaction soccer game instead of some kind of egghead management sim. With the release of Winning Eleven 7 for the PC. computer gamers have finally been treated to the best pure arcade soccer game available with a keyboard or a gamepad.

While casual fans may not immediately appreciate it, Konami's offerings are far truer to the flow of actual soccer than the FIFA series, which feels like a combination of hockey and basketball on grass by comparison. The pace is a bit slower, the ball movement more realistic, and there is less focus on highlight play after highlight play A well-played game of Winning Eleven 7 gives the impression of having watched a TV soccer match and controlled the results. It's that good.

While most PC sports gamers will own some form of gamepad, configuring yours for this game takes a bit of effort-when I first plugged in my USB Logitech pad,

none of the buttons did what it was supposed to do. This is apparently normal. Fortunately, there is an extensive controller configuration utility. Because this is essentially a straight console port, the game has no real mouse functionality.

Once all the buttons are doing what they should, you'll find Winning Eleven's gameplay more demanding than the FIFA series. The many tactical modes extend to the ability to fine-tune teamwork and cooperation between players as well as the ability to properly manage game formations and substitutions, and together they make Winning Eleven a complete soccer package, it won't be until you've recovered from the idea that you're actually able to re-create true soccer gameplay on the PC that you'll notice the outstanding graphics (both player and stade um renderings), impressive animations, and generally good commentary by Peter Brackley and Trevor Brooking.

The one thing you won't be able to do with Winning Eleven 7 is play with actual players and teams in the world's major soccer leagues. While Fox Sports World advertises its English Premier League cov-





The goalmouth action feels just chaotic enough.



Mational teams get the proper treatment.

erage in the back of the manual, the league options are vanilla, with four twodivision leagues in the career mode Fortunately there is a game editor, and this being a PC game, edited files have already sprung up for download from fan sites. Despite its lack of major licensing, Winning Eleven 7 brings the true spirit of soccer to the PC Bruce Geryk

Verdict \*\*\* Some serious footle.

### ik Virtual Skipper 3

#### Proof that there was a Virtual Skipper 1 and 2

and that of salung sime a fee the pital and poet physics, provide remember?—and the incessant anatics ("Realistic? When the Trimara) racks a full .34 seconds fastely n one I salled in Sydney in ppeared that the gen

Virtual Skipper 3. easily the

👯 , Hor Whatever that's worth. Real KIDDERS Will find that the variety of bio A) on Guy Class, Mêlges 24 was we stand

oth a challer to a second in the state of th memors to Races are located in wife 



### Verdict \*\*\* water a street and a second



The secrets of the past have been forgotten, but the Saga of Ryzom has just begun.

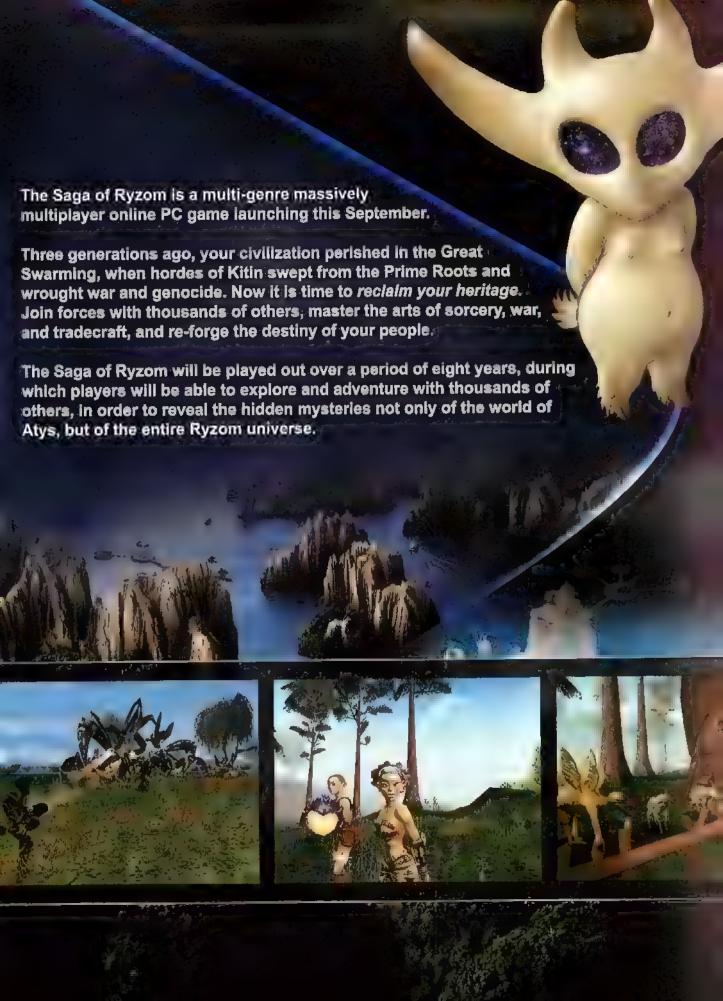
For many centuries I have voyaged through the quiescent corridors of Ryzom. I bore witness to the Green Rising of Atys, and the birth of Hominkind. I witnessed their striving for survival in a merciless world of killing plants and swarming beasts. Worse, entrenched in their brutish ignorance they gave themselves to bloodshed in their vying for power with their own kin. Thus weakened by interracial warfare and bound to their territories in their self-imposed segregation, they fell victim to the terrible swarming of the Kitin...

Elias Tryton, Year 2525





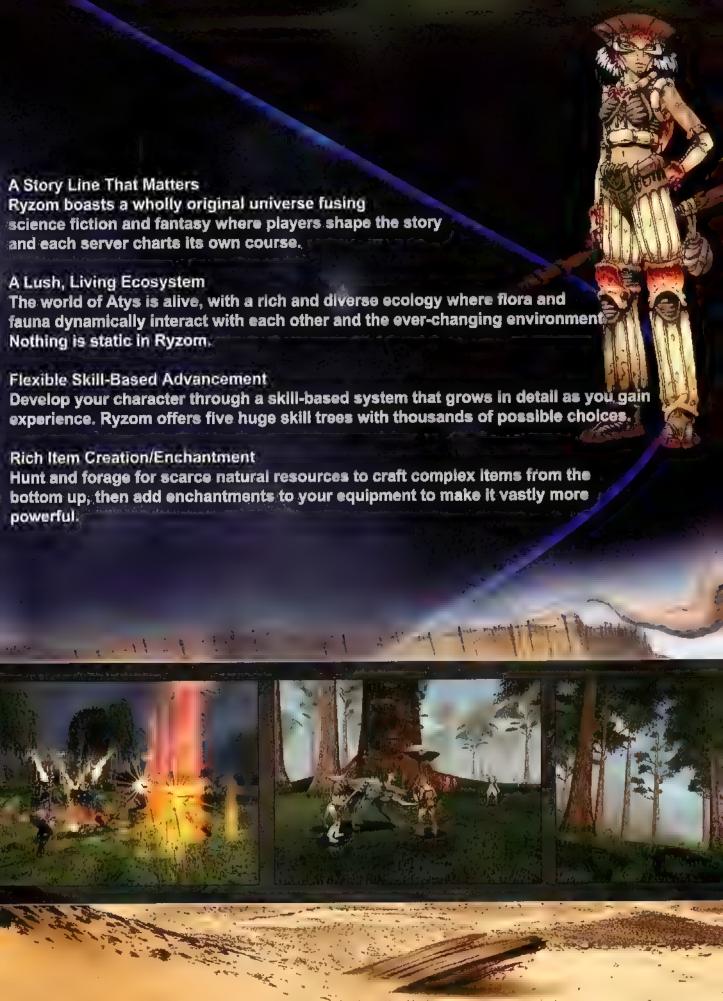


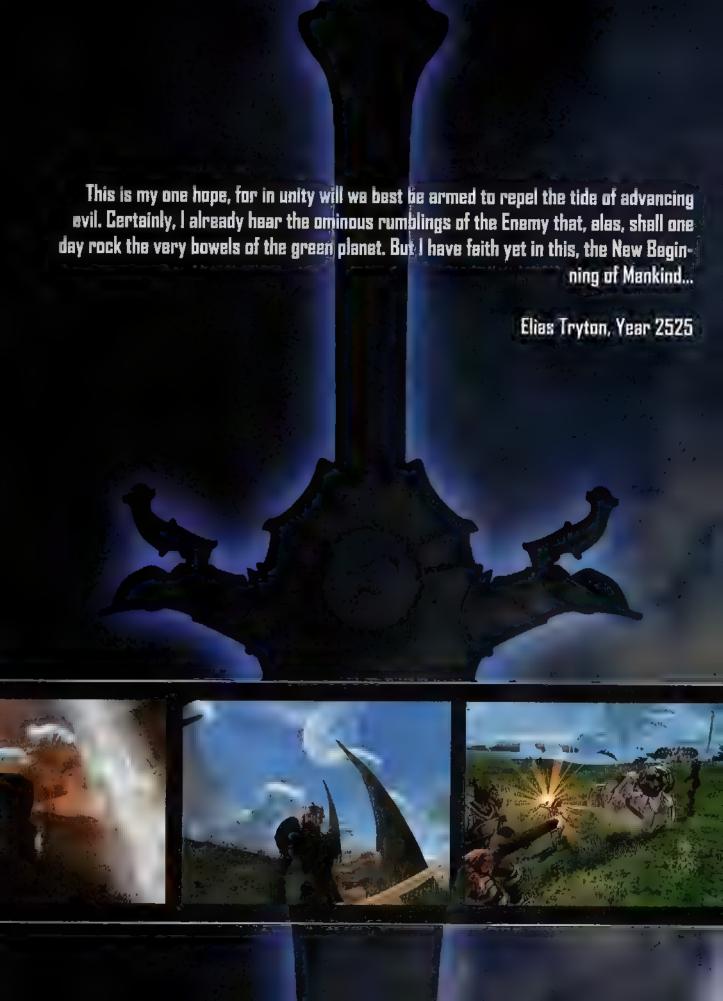


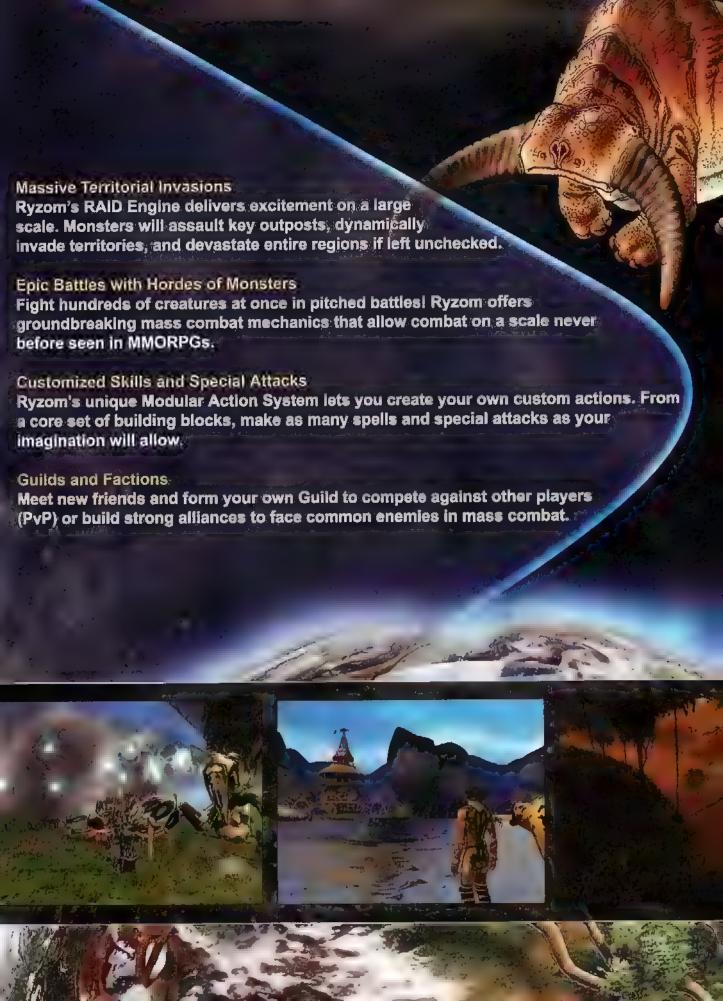
Three generations have since passed for healing wounds and rebuilding lives, for introspection and rekindling the spirit of hominkind. The time has now come for the wise and the brave to take up the reins of ambition, to blaze the trail to a new order, to span the rifts between continents and forge the destinies of their civilizations.

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We take a look at the hottest, and in some cases, the coolest stuff out this fall.



Last month, we tried to help the kids with some "back to school advice. This month's Tech section is devoted to the latest in over-the-top gear, Loyd Case beats up on Voodoo's 'silent system " New CGW reviewer Chris Angelini takes some lime away from writing for Sharkvextreme com to review Intel's latest mobo and ATI's midrange card. We also take a look at Dell's latest gaming rig the Generation 3 Dimension

XPS, and Joel shows you how To keep your motherboard's firmware up to date. Sit back and enjoy. And if you have any comments about this month's Tech section head over to recently relaunched 1JPcom and let fly with the hate.









### SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The VoodooPC F50 won't win any awards for looks, but the only sounds it will make will be from your games

www.voodoopc.com \* \$5.745

Based on a \$1,200 silent case system from Zalman, the VoodooPC F50 generates no fan noise whatsoever, Booting it up is almost eerie, as all you hear is the low-level chatter from the hard drive. If not for that and the Windows fanfare when the OS comes up, you'd swear it wasn't running at all.

GHAN, FACTURER VoodooPC

The F50 is massive, weighing in at nearly 60 pounds. The chassis looks like an industrial heater since the case itself is part of the cooling system, replete with fins, heat pipes, and a fanless power supply. The CPU, north bridge, and graphics-card fans have been replaced by heat-pipe coolers that are connected directly to the thick aluminum case. The fins on the case itself serve to vent heat. A pair of solid doors hides the front and back, which would otherwise be completely open-no front bezels on this puppy. Cable guides grace the top and bottom of the case, allowing for easy

#### If silence is the **Holy Grail of PC** gaming, then its King Arthur is performance.

cable management, VoodooPC takes the case and adds its paint magic and system-building mojo—the result is a killer gaming box that's utterly noiseless

#### What's inside?

Inside the box resides an Athlon 64 3800+, a gigabyte of DDR400 memory, an ATI Radeon X800 XT Platinum Edition, and a RAID array based around the 10,000 rpm 74GB Raptor drives from Western Digital, A pair of Plextor optical drives (DVD+/-RW and CD-RW) round out storage. Since this is a gaming rig, we configured the system with an Audiqu 2 ZS soundcard

If silence is the Holy Grail of PC gaming, then its King Arthur is performance. The F50 has that in spades, posting a 3DMark2003 score in excess of 12,000. We saw framerates in Far Cry north of

100fps, and that was with lots of eve candy turned on, though the average framerate was closer to about 80fps And we were hitting over 80fps in Unreal Tournament 2003 and over 150fps in Call of Duty, all at high resolutions. Suffice it to say that game performance is excellent.

The combination of an Athlon 64 3800+ and the Radeon X800 XT is a potent one that's likely to keep you in high framerate territory for most games. Heck, even Doom 3 might be playable with some pretty visuals turned on. The RAID configuration enables fast loading of levels, and using the Raptor drives offers some assurance that the array will be reliable under heavy use

When we say "silence is golden," we mean it. This system will set you back \$5,745. This does not include a monitor. keyboard, or mouse, but it does include a copy of Windows XP Professional That's a lot of loose change, though you can save \$400 by skipping the fancy paint job Buy it and your ears will thank you. E Loyd Case

SCORE





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PC Game



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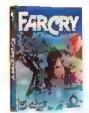
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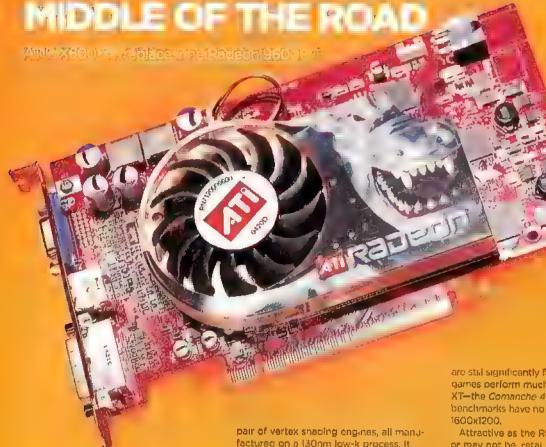
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It's easy to get excited about top-shelf hardware, the kind of stuff that costs more than one month's rent but is fast enough to justify the price. Mainstream components just aren't as sexy. However, with the advent of PCI Express, even midrange hardware includes exciting new technology, and that's not counting platform advancements such as DDR2 system memory and high-fidelity audio.

ATI's Radeon X600 XT is an evolutionary step beyond the Radeon 9600 XT. with native support for PCI Express x16 graphics rather than the standard AGP 8x slot, which gives it a total of 8GB per secand of bidirectional bandwidth compared with AGP's 2.1GB per second, Quite simply, there's more room to accommodate demanding applications, such as editing high-definition video in real time. But the chip itself centers on the same architecture, featuring four-pixel pipelines and a

factured on a 430nm low-k process. It even sports the same 500MHz core clock speed, Fortunately, ATI did make improvements to the card's memory subsystem, employing 128MB of 370MHz DDR RAM on a 128-bit bus to poost available band width by 22 percent,

Whereas higher-end PCI Express graphas cards come with a six-pin power connector to augment the interface's power dekvery, ATI's Radeon X600 XT doesn't need the extra juice. As a result, you may be able to get away with not buying a new power supply on top of the motherboard, processor, memory, and videocard needed to enjoy PCI Express graphics on intel's 925X chipset. And because the card is small with a minimalist heat sink, it works well in a small form-factor or hometheater-gaming environment.

The Radeon X600 XT's resulting performance characteristics are certainly respectable. Far Cry is playable at 1024x768, running at nearly 45 frames per second. Of course, that's sign ficantly slower than ATi's PCI Express flagship, the X800 XT, or even Ny dia's single-slot GeForce 6800 GT both of which are still playable right up to 1500x1200. The X600 XT fares slightly better in Unreal Tournament 2004, where it nearly hits 37 frames per second at 1600x1200. Naturally, the other two cards

are still significantly faster, Less-demanding games perform much better on the X600 XT-the Comanche 4 and Final Fantusy XI benchmarks have no problems running at

Attractive as the Radeon X600 XT may or may not be, retail availability is still undetermined, although ATI confirms that it won't manufacture on AGP implementation of the chip. According to ATI, all of the company's PCI Express products are currently shipping to OEMs and system integrators since there isn't an upgrade market quite yet. When it does emerge on store shelves, expect prices between \$199. and \$299, depending on display and memory configurations. When you compare that to the \$499 required to take home ATI's X800 XT and consider the number of new components needed to build a platform centering on the new 925% chipset. ATI's mainstream Radeon X600 XT gets a whole lot sexier. Chris Angelini

#### SCORE: 大大大小台

# INTEL'S LATEST-FAST, BUT AT A PREMIUM

Intel's D925XCV motherboard has everything you may someday need

The proliferation of new technology is quite often an arduous process, intel's new 925X chipset isn't going to be any different, especially since it relies on the rapid adoption of DDR2 system memory, PCI Express graphics cards, and LGA775 processors. The process has to start somewhere, though, which is why Intel is unveiling its D925XCV motherboard. Sporting all of the latest core logic's bells and whistles, the D925XCV is designed with enough performance in mind, intel hopes, to encourage a swift shift to the vision of intel's digital home.

At the heart of the D925XCV lies an MCH (memory controller hub) bearing the chipsot's 925X name. Responsible for communication between processor, graphics, and memory, the board's MCH exclusively supports PCI Express x16 graphics (say good-bye to your AGP 8x videocard), up to 4GB of DDR2 memory running at either 400MHz or 533MHz (bid farewell to the DDR400 modules

The D925XCV is designed with enough performance in mind, Intel hopes, to encourage a swift shift to the vision of Intel's digital home.

you just bought), and a Pentium 4 processor designed for the new LGA775 socket interface (donate your old Socket 478 chip to someone who'll give you a good Christmas present) It also connects to a new ICH (I/O Controller Hub) with its own set of special features through a new 2GB-per-second bid rectional link.

The ICH6 reflects Intel's push (or greater integrated functionality. To begin, it supports PCI Express XI slots, of which the motherboard offers two. It's a so egu poed with four Serial ATA connectors with hardware support for RAID 0 striping and RAID 1 mirroring. The chipset only supports one parallel ATA port to offer compatibility with optical drives, making it necessary for you to buy a Senal ATA hard drive. Another lauded feature is the board's 7.1-channel High Definition Audio. a new standard championed by Intel. It has enough fidelity to support the Dolby Digital EX, DTS, and THX specifications, given proper software support. Finally, the D925XCV comes equipped with Gigabit Ethernet and eight USB 2.0 ports.

A Lof that newfangled technology is pricey, unfortunately. The motherboard alone sells for \$230 on the street Moreover, DDR2-533 memory is roughly two times more expensive than standard DDR400, Add a PCI Express graphics card, power supply, and an LGA775 processor, and you can see why upgrading to a D925XCV is somewhat daunting Finally, keep in mind that the slogan for



prefer the tireless pursuit of performance, check out ABIT's AA8-DuraMAX or ASUS' P5AD2, @ Chris Angelini

SCORE: 4 7 8 8 8



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## SPEED FREAK

it would be nice to say that with the Velocity Micro Vision 64, you could have it all: a powerful computer with decent components for a bargain price. Sadly, some trim-level defects and instability keep this system

from being everything we had hoped for. The Vision 64's case comes with a spiffy grey-black paint job and a front-side temperature reactout for multiple sensors, but it feels filmsy. The bezels don't stay onwhen rejected one of the DVD drives, the tray blow its bezel right off and onto the floor. Another bezal is missing in action giving you a nice view of the inside of the

performance numbers even when pitted against this year's Uit mate Game Machine. rigs, and the Vision 64 hovers around the same price range as those systems (if you add a monitor and speakers)

Fran 3DMark2003 at 1280x1024 with 4x AA and 8x AF (enabled through the grap t ics card's driver applet, not through 3DMark2003), and it spat back one of the finest scores we've seen to date: 6)97. That and the Halo score of 85fps (run at 1280x1024 without AA or AF) put it ahead of the ABS Ultimate M6 (thanks, of course, to the 6800 Ultra)

Real-world tests left me satisfied. The

Vision 64 crunched through plagish titles such as Far Cry and Joint Operations Typhoon Rising with hary a slowdown, It was almost enough to make me forgive the gap-toothed bezel-

But the bezel wasn't the only thing to raise my ire. During playtesting the system locked up about half a dozen times over the course of five days. Rhyme and reason didn't prevail, as it hanged at different times and at different temperatures. It locked during play in several games, once while installing a game, and it even froze a couple of times immediately after booting in other instances, I was able to play for hours without a hitch.

it's very possible that the freezes are unique to this particular unit—a bad RAM module, for instance, or a motherboard defect could be at fault. Regardless, this was a loss than stellar showing for what should have been a midrange dream, 🕏 Joel Durham Jr.

SCORE: \*\*\*

rig. Also, the windowed's depane was warped

The guts are about right considering the Vision 64's price. While that 256MB GoPo de 6800 Ultra is il mon ster the AMD Athlon 64 3800 F is a little weak compared to an EX-53, nevertheless, the Vision 64 s numbers are still impressive. Velocity gave its rig alg sabyte of DDR memory biasting along at 400MHz. A single Western Digital hard drive provides 250GB of space for games and arods (and, I you must. Quicken fies), while the audio is taken care of by an onboard chip. If I could change one bit of gear, it would be the audio equipment: With so many games taking advantage of EAX Advanced HD. I'd have liked a Creative Labs SoundBlaster Audiov 2-based soundcard here

#### A high-velocity performer with a catch

By fitting the Vision 64 with a bleedingedge graphics card, Velocity guaranteed impressive gaming benchmarks. Indeed, it's a mighty system, kicking out serious



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# L'S GAMING

Dell's Generation 3 Dimension XPS is a safe way to try out the latest technology

When Dell burst onto the gaming scene with its original XPS gaming system, we welcomed its arrival with tempered optimism. We love Dell's reputation for shipping stable systems and we've never had any problems with its tech support. That said, we worried that its use of proprietary parts and commitment to intel would hamper performance. We were right. The XPS systems are plenty solid, but they aren't the speed demons we've seen from Voodoo, Falcon, Alienware, or Gateway. Dell has recently released its Gen 3 XPS. And while it's faster than its predecessors, when it comes to performance, it's still slower than the competition.

# New technologu

The big news in PC hardware is the introduction of PCI Express and Intel's latest chipset, Dell's Gen 3 XPS doesn't necessarily take advantage of all that this technology has to offer-we didn't expect it to. While the Generation 3 XPS ships with ATI's 256MB Radeon X800 XT PCI Express graphics card, Dell passed on using the chipset's integrated High Definition Audio, going with Creative Lab's Audigy 2 add-in PCI card instead. But this is a double-edged sword that exemplifies the so-called Dell experience. We've spoken to a few people who have had trouble with intel's High Definition Audio, and because Dell went with Creative's proven product, customers who buy the Gen 3 XPS won't be calling Dell's tech support about the sound. Then again, gamers who want the hottest technology currently available won't be pleased. Also, while the two cards are pretty close when it comes to performance, ATI's Radeon X800 XT is slower than Nyidia's GeForce 6800 GT.

Nevertheless, the Gen 3 XPS does come with

some cool goodles: dual

250GB Western Digital

hard drives in a 500GB

RAID 0 configuration, IGB of DDR2 memory, Intel's 3.6GHz Pentium 4 processor, a DVD multidrive and a standard CD-RW, Logitech's Z680 5.1 speakers, and, oh yeah, Dell's awesome 20.1inch 2001FP LCD monitor. The XPS also has tons of USB ports and multiple FireWire oorts.

# Take me to the numbers

Like we mentioned earlier, the XPS' weakest link is in the performance department. We benchmarked it at 1280x1024 and 1600x1200 with 4x AA and 8x AF turned on. With that in mind, its 3DMark2003 score of 4,908 at 1280x1024 is fewer than 200 points less than the 5,087 that our Nvidia GeForce 6800 GT-equipped Killer Rio achieved. Actual game tests are where its shortcomings really showed up. Its 30 GameGauge 3.5 score of 58fps at 1280x1024 is about 40fps less than the Killer Rig's score! That's significant.

Of course, numbers only tell part of a system's story. The fact remains that this machine is fast enough to handle any games you can throw at it. Furthermore. you get the assurance of knowing that if anything goes wrong with it, you've got a major corporation backing it up. That said. Dell is still using a proprietary motherboard, meaning it's not the most upgradeable system around. But hey, Dell knows this, if you're a hardcore gamer who doesn't have plans on upgrading anytime soon, you'll no doubt be pleased with the Gen 3 XPS. That 20.1-inch LCD is supersexy, those Logitech speakers are the

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- Multimodia Keyboard
- Microsoft\* Windows\* XP Home Edition
- ~ Free Norion AnliVirus™ 2004 00
- Free 1-Year 24/7 I-Gara Daluxe Technical Support + On-Sila Servica



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AMD Athlon™ 64 2800+ Processor





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for the opening Microsoft Windows XP SP2. BUYPOWER \*Conserves power and operates quietly with AMD Cool n'Quiet M technology,

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- AMD<sup>a</sup> Aihlen<sup>va</sup> 64 Processor with HyperTransport<sup>to</sup> Technology The ONLY Windows-composible 64-bit PC processor up to 1600Mhz system bus
- Raidmax<sup>a</sup> Aluminum 8-Bay Super Light Weight Tower Caso with 420 Watt Power + See-Through Window + Sound-Activated Neon Light
- 1024MB DDR400 Memory
- 160GB 7200RPM Hard Drive
- 12X DVD±R/±RW Drive: 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- Greative Labs 56K V.92 Fax Modern
- ATI® RADEON™ X800 Pro 258MB DDR AGP 8X Video Cord
- 5.1 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound
- 10/100/1000 MBps Ethernet LAN
- Loglicoh 2-640 5.1 Surround Sound Speakers
- 19" ViowSania" Perfect Flat E90FB .21H mm Monitor
- Microsoft<sup>a</sup> Opolial 5-Bulton Intel·lMouse Explorer, Multimedia Keyboard Microsoft Windows® XP Home Edition & Free Notion AntiVirus™ 2004 CD
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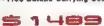
- AMD® Athlen™ 64 Processor with HyperTransport™ Technology The ONLY Windows-compatible 64-bit PC processor up to 1800Mhz system bus
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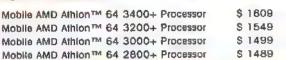
# \$ 599

AMD Athion** 64 3400+ Processor	\$ 729
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- 3-In-1 Build-In Media Card Reader
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- AMD® Athlon™ 64 Processor with HyperTransport™ Technology The ONLY Windows-compatible 64-bit PC processor up to 1600Mhx system bus
- NZXT\* Guardian MOD Tower Case with 420 Wott Power + See-Through Window + Sound-Activoled Neon Light
- ~ 512MB DDR400 Memory
- 80GB 7200RPM Hard Drive
- 16x DVD-ROM & 52x32x82 CD-RW Combo Drive
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- NVIDIA® GeForce™ FX 5200 128MB DDR AGP 8X Video Cord
- 5.1 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound
- 10/100 MBps Ethersel LAN
- 600Walt Surround Sound Speakers
- Opcilal Mouse & Multimedia Keyboard
- Microsoft Windows\* XP Home Edition
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AMD Athlon™	64 3800+ Processor	\$ 1319
AMD Athlon™	64 3500+ Processor	\$ 979
AMD Athlon™	64 3400+ Processor	\$ 879
AMD Athlon™	64 3200+ Processor	\$ 809
AMD Alhlon <sup>16</sup>	64 3000+ Processor	\$ 759
AMD Alblon™	64 2800+ Processor	\$ 749

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- AMD\* Athlen\*\* 64 Processor with HyperTransport\*\* Technology
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- NZXT\* Buardian MOD Tower Case with 420 Walt Power + See-Through Window + Sound-Activated Nean Light
- 512M8 DDR400 Memory
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- 12X DVD=R/=RW + CD-RW Drive
- Creative Labs 58K V.92 Fax Modem
- ATI" RADEON™ 9600-XT 256M6 DDR AGP SX Video Cord
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- Microsoft Windows\* XP Home Edition
- Free 1 Year 24/7 I-Dara Doluxe Technical Support + On-Sile Service

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AMD Athlon™	4 64 3500+ Processor	\$ 1139
AMD Alhlon™	M 64 3400+ Processor	\$ 1039
AMD Alhlon™	* 64 3200+ Processor	\$ 969
AMD Alhion™	4 64 3000+ Processor	\$ 919
AMD Athlon™	M 64 2800+ Processor	\$ 899

CREATIVE

# GO GO GADGET!

Check out the latest crop of toys that are occupying Wil's time



# MONSTER GECKO PISTOLMOUSE FPS GAMING MOUSE D

People have been trying like mad to come up with a better way to play first-person shooters than with the keyboard and mouse. You know what? They haven't, And

this is why the PistolMouse is so interesting. You're still technically playing with the keyboard and laser mouse, although holding a pistol in your hand does add a touch of realism. Be warned, though, that playng games with the PistolMouse takes some getting used to.



# **GCREATIVE MUVO SLIM**

The depate still rages on about the relative ments of flash media-based devices (Creative's MuVo line and Apple's iPod Mini) versus harddrive-based devices (Creative's Nomad line and the original iPod). The thing is, they each have their good and not-so-good points. Creative's

MuVo Slim, regardless of that debate, is awesome. It has 256MB of flash memory (so it'll never skip), and supports USB 2.0, and the rechargeable battery lasts up to 17 hours and recharges while it's plugged into your USB port.

BURL www.samsung.com; www.sprintpes.com PRICE \$200 (\$50 with

# SAMSUNG VI660 (SPRINT PCS) 🔂

if picture phones aren't your thing, Samsung's VI660 is the perfect phone for you at around \$50. You can download a ton of ring tones, surfithe internet, and play games on it. There's even a gamepad accessory available.



El Rt. www.jackstvgomes.com F \$20 JAKKS PACIFIC TV GAMES 104 COMPLIES MING WORL

While XBN's Andrew Burwel thinks that JAKKS TV Games are merely "s"" ty old games, we still can't get enough of them. Call it nostalgia. Call it. Generation X gone too far. Or call it akin to sleeping with an ex-girlfriend. The fact remains that everyone loved Pong the Atari 2600, and Ms. Pac-Man back in the day, and it's hard to not love 'em now. 🖾 By William O'Neal



# Wil loses the forest for the trees...again

Mcamade you excited Years ago could this with my computer for any second the change for the change for the computer of the c second I could squeeze out of it only to restor the default settings security carlosity and bless cated once installed Linux on a messaline days to complete Once I had it up and renning libraged to a group triange the constalled windows Now, though vendors seed mainto about their latest products and onto let our sufet and lament the woo mat company we see technology will mean for me try me survey of course, every lock and then some thing comparations are charged. elt ormy Busk

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When you was point by does für about computing As in saying goes. Don't loss the roll of the town for the training of the William O't loss.



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# acked Case

# Network me

ere in "The Basement," as my lab is affectionately known, the systems are all networked together. This is also where my Friday Night Follies LAN party sessions take place. Networking a bunch of homebrew systems in a single room may sound difficult, but in fact It's pretty easy. Buy a switch, connect up all the PCs, configure IP addresses, and go. If you add a router to the mix, it's even easier, because the router will auto-assign IP addresses to your systems. The thing is, this isn't good enough. My wife and daughters, for example, wanted to connect to the cable modem throughout the entire house,

A happy wife makes for a happy life

So a couple of years ago, we had the house wired. We had full CATSe going to the dining room and all three bedrooms A Linksys 16-port 10/100 fast Ethernet switch lived inside the Leviton box and handled all the physical connections for both the office and throughout the house. An SMC router lived between the switch and the cable modern

For a while, that was good enough, I could connect easily to the Ziff Davis network via VPN. My wife would happily connect up in the living room to surf the Web. Her situation was somewhat complicated by the fact that her employer had supplied her with a private DSL line, so her work connectivity was limited to her office. The kids both had fast Ethernet connections in their bedrooms, giving them Web access and, more important to them, IM (instant messenger) access.

Then my wife's employer decided to pull the private DSL line and supply her with VPN software, offering to pay part of the cost of the cable modern line. Now suddenly she wanted VPN access everywhere. At the same time, I was getting a bit tired of having "mere" fast Ethernet

access. Gigabit Ethernet beckoned.

So I pulled the SMC router and Linksys switch, I found a Dell 24-port Gigabit Ethernet switch for under \$400, which replaced the 16-port 10/100 switch, A D-Link AirPlus Xtreme G router took the place formerly occupied by the SMC router. The AirPius is both a wired and wireless router, supporting a sort of turbo 80211g protocol for wireless networking that can double throughput if you have supported "turbo g" capable cards or chips in your mobile computers. Most of the PCs on the wired network are Gloabit capable a ready, thanks to the wonders of motherboard integration

So now my wife happily connects to work from anywhere in the house. My daughters really don't notice much difference, and I can move really big files around the wired network more quickly than before. All was well ift did take a

© You're not Loyd.'If you were Loyd you'd need a 24 Port Glgabit Ethernet Switch in your house too.

bit of figuring to set up all the wirelesscapable PCs in a secure manner, but I can now keep casual, drive-by users from connecting to my network

This actually solved another niggling problem. You see, when I had CAT5e wire pulled throughout the house, I'd forgotten to wire the family room. That's where the television and multichannel audio system live. Now, I can connect in with 802,11g. and get network access on the big-screen television through the home-theater PC Heck, I've even played some internet games on the big Samsung 50-Inch DLP rear-projection television.

All of this was not without cost, however. And today, I'd probably still wire up the house, though with CAT6. But one banus of the cabling we used originally is that the cable bundle includes fiber-optic connections to every room. So I've begun thinking... 🛭 Loyd Case

Networking a bunch of homebrew systems in a single room may sound difficult, but in fact it's pretty easy, Buy a switch, connect up all the PCs. configure IP addresses, and go.

# ck Out











# Inside

Check us out! No, really, check us out!

After nine months of regurgitating the same old boring A-List and four-page Rewind spread, we've retooled the Check Out section with some fresh new stuff, Killer Rig is back and badder than ever (in a good way), and our new Fast Forward section will bring you plenty of dynamic content each month. Now check us out, dammitt

# Back by...uh...demand

Revolutions rarely work -they're typically an extreme overreaction to an already extreme situation, if history has taught us anything, it's that happiness is best found in the middle. The problem is that technology doesn't necessarily change from month to month, and because of that we killed it. You know what happened? It didn't change much from month to month, either. With that in mind, we've decided to find a happy medium. Each month, we'll build either a low- or high-end Killer Rig from either Intel or AMD, and the shortened A-List will boast a more dynamic variety of products. ensuring that the list itself chariges from month to month

# Behold, intel's newest chipset

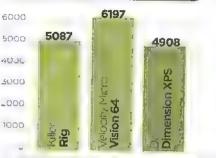
Just when you thought you had this whole CPU thing figured out, Intel went and shook things up by announcing two new chipsets: the 925X (Alderwood) and the 915G (Grantsdale), I managed to get my hands on Intel's 925X-based D925XCV motherboard and decided to build a machine around it. Holy crap! This motherboard is awasome For starters, the D925XCV has a ton of cool features, including support for PCI Express graphics and DDR2 memory, as well as builtin Gigabit Ethernet and onboard HD Audio.

I built my 925X machine in an Antec PI60 case, using a HiPRO 460W power supply, Nvidia's 256MB GeForce 6800 GT PCI Express graphics card, 1G8 of Micron DDR2 memory, and a pair of 250GB Maxtor hard drives in a 500GB RAID 0 configuration.

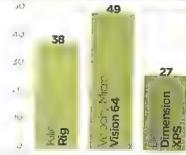
I benchmarked my machine with 3DMark2003, AquaMark 2003, and 3DGameGauge 3.5, all with 4x AA and 8x AF turned on-and I'm happy to report that this machine screams, its 3DMark2003 scores of 5,087 and 3,880 at 1280x1024 and 1600x1200 are truly impressive, and we all know how awesome Halo scores of 77 and 61 frames per second are, Numbers aside, the D925XCV is also extremely easy to install: The board ships with a huge fold-out diagram that highlights how to connect the front-panel connectors as well as the various USB and FireWire cables, Sleek, simple, and functional Word! @William O'Neat



# 3DMark2003 Pro v.340



# AquaMark2003



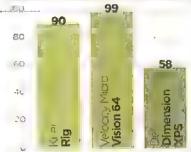


ente + Z680 5.1 speakers

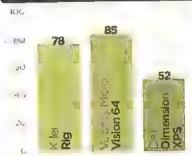
# The Guts

HOME.	POWER FIS	PURKS
Operating system	Windows XP Professional Edition	\$300
Case	Antec PI60	\$100
Power supply	HIPRO 460W	\$100
Processor (CPU)	Intol 3 4GHz Pentium Extremo Edition (800MHz FSB)	\$1,000
Motherboard	Intel D925XCV (lete) 925X chipset, code-named Alderwood )	\$250
Momory	1GB Micron DDR2	\$200
Hord driva	Oual 250GB Maxtor Maximo SATA hard drives in a 500GB RAID 0 configuration	\$500
Graphics processor	ZSUMB Navidia GAFOrce 6800 GT PCI Express	5500
Soundcard	Ontic dilater High Bot Hon Ac Jip	
Optical drive	Plenser DVR-107D DVD 7+RW combo drive	\$100
Monitor	ylevisonin VP20ts 201 inc	\$1,000
Keyboard/ mouse	Microsoft Wireless Optical Desktop Elite	<b>\$100</b>
Speakers	Logitech 2680 51 speakers	\$300
Miscellaneous	Gijabit 10/100, 1000 Mil trused LAN wight USB 2 0 rints four convenional PCI stors two PCI Express albus stots one PCI Express alb bus siots graphies card; gno 394 F aWere port	5
TOTAL COST		\$4,460

# 3DGameGuage 3.5



# Halo - Shader 1.0 88



# Our picks

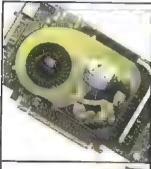
"Hey, wait!" you're probably saying. "This isn't the same boring six pages of A-List I see every month! What's up with that?" Yes, A-List has been trimmed down to just two pages in order to make room for all the other great new Check Out content. Now, instead of presenting you with the same eerily similar six-page hardware guide each month, we'll have two pages of rotating monthly selections from different categories, courtesy of CGW hardware ninja Wil O'Neal. And in return, you can all stop sending us hate mall about the A-List. That's a fair trade, right?





What's up with this newfangled PCI Express thing? Can't we just stick with our AGP cards? Sheesh, it hasn't even been around that long. Only like...seven years or so. Excuse us while we sit in our corner and feel old.

# **Uideocard**



# PRODUCT

HIGH-END PICK

256MB Nvidia GeForce 6800 GT \$500 Nvidla

MIDRANGE PICK

256MB ATI Radeon X600 \$200 to \$300

BUDGET PICK

128MB ATT Radeon 9600 XT \$150 ATI

At the heart of Wil's Killer Rig, Nyidia's flagship card is fast and even more power-hungry than Ryan Scott. The first PCI Express card we've played with this thing blows its AGP competition away. Of course, not everyone can just run out and plug it in, it needs more power than NORAD and a PCI Express x16-capable motherboard—to really take advantage of its awesome power.

WHY YOU SHOULD HUNGED THE STREET OF STREET BEINGS

The midrange market is where companies make all their money. That's because not everyone is gonna run out and drop \$500 on an after-market graphics card. ATPs midrange PCI Express option, the X600, will cost anywhere from \$200 to \$300 depending on the configuration (memory, etc.) you choose. While it'll be plenty fast for current games, how it will handle Half-Life 2 and Doom 3 remains to be seen.

The Radeon 9600 XT used to be ATI's midrange pick. Of course, that was before everyone jumped on the PCI Express bandwagon. If you're still running an AGP system and are on a budget, then you can't go wrong with this card, it's fast enough for most games that are out right now, and it won't break the bank



One day, we'll all be wearing geeky calculator and PDA belt holsters, just like Darren Gladstone. OK, so he doesn't actually wear one of those-but he was recently seen gloating over his new N-Gage QD screenshot-capture kit, which is even geakler.

Laptop



## PRODUCT

### HIGH-END PICK

Satellite P25-S670 Media Center laptop \$2,599

Tachiha

JOHTWHIGHT PICK

200ARC \$2,225 Gateway

## WHY YOU SHOULD BUY IT

Toshiba's Satellite P25-S670 Media Center laptop is the ultimate lack-of-all-trades, is it a TiVo? Yes, is it a gaming laptop? Yes, is it a DVD player? Yes. While it's not as fast as Dell's Inspiron XPS, the Satellite P25-5670 is just plain cool.

With its light weight and built-in 802.11b/g wireless capsbilities, we're in love with Gateway's 200ARC. Add the built-in DVD multidrive into the mix and this baby is the ultimate road warrior.

# Phone



# PRODUCT

### OUR PICK

Samsung VM-A680 (Sprint PCS)

\$300 (\$150 with service commitment) Samsung

# WHY YOU SHOULD BUY IT

The Samsung VM-A680 is a multimedia workhorse that lets you do everything from watching te evision (streamed over the phone) and playing games to taking pictures or videos of the ladies in your chemistry class, which you can e-mall, or send to other Sprint PCS-enabled phones. Hell, when you're done with all that, you can even call Mom and ask for more beer money...er, lunch money

# PNA



# PRODUCT AND A PRODUCT OF THE PROPERTY OF THE P

# OUR PICK

Sony

: Sony CLIE UX-50 \$500

Notebooks are great, but even the thinnest and lightest ones are a pain in the ass to jug around compus. PDAs are just way more convenient. Just ask Darren, the resident gadget dork: He swears by this one, it's got a sidekick-sized keyboard that can type up documents, built-in Wi-Fi for Web surfing in class, and one sweet friggin' design. These pupples, while hard to find, are worth the search.

-WHY YOU SHOULD BUY IT -- -- -

# Gadget



# PRODUCT

### DUS PICK

Nomad Jukebox Zen Xtra MP3 Player \$400 Creative Labs

# WHY YOU SHOULD BUY IT

Don't get suckered into buying an iPod-it can't read half the file types of the Zen Xtra (namely WMA). So what are you gonna do with the 60GB of space? Upload your whole music collection in a flash, thanks to the USB 2.0 hookup. Then stash your homework and term papers with all the room you've got left over

# Forward

Hey look, something besides six boring pages of A-List! Welcome to our new Fast Forward section, where you'll find plenty of random and goofy stuff to keep yourself entertained for five minutes (at least!).

The Overrated/Underrated feature from our June 2004 issue was a pretty big hit, and we've been flooded with e-mail telling us how much everyone loved it. You ask, we listen—here are a few more Overrated/Underrated picks for you!

# **NOSTALGIA TRIP**

### **ADVENTURE GAMES**

mave you looked around on the Woo rately? There are tons of people getting all wistful about the olden days of adventure gaming There are even a few fan groups dedicated to remaking some of Sierra's and LucasArts crassic Litles. Sorry to break it to



you, guys but adventure games ain't what they used to beand probably never will be again

SINGLE-PLAYER RPGS You just don't see too many good single-player RPGs for the PC these days, Sure, we got Knights of the Old Republic last year, and there's a sequel due out pretty soon. But what ever happened to the good old days of Ultima Wizardry, and Might & Magic? Heck, even Planascape: Torment seems like ages ago. What a shame!

THE MOST OVERRALED/UNDERNATED

# CODE THEFT

AVERAGED HALF-LIFE 2 Yes, we understand that the code theft caused Half-Life 2 to be delayed a bit longer. That's all well and good, but there comes a point when we have to wonder whether it's just become a convenient excuse—we're about to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the game's original September 30 street date, and the damn game is still

Understand GATES OF TROY The gold master for Slitherine Strategies Gates of Troy was stolen from a London postman in late June Slitherine has pushed back the game's release date, fearing possible piracy troubles. That is, if these malicious thieves realize exactly what it is they've got, Um, what the hell is this game again?



# 🛱 City of

Where else cans sae Johnny Llu and Ryan Scott dressed up as

spandex-clad crime-busting-hero ines—besides the office lunchroom Pon't ask. Yeah, so I'm builty, too.



# 🖫 Joint Operations /phoon

For the record. Johnny's a cheap

pitch when it comes to U72004 That's why I have him play on my teamin these kinds of games now



## Crusader: No Remorse

OK so I had to dip into the not talgla bin for this one. Before

Diable was raising hell, this game in up my hot-rod Pentium 80. It's a shame it limit playable on newer PC.



# WEB GAME

### BOOKWORM To

be fair, Bookworm (and the rest of PopCap's outstanding puzzle library) really does deserve all the credit it gets. But boy, did we ever go overboard with this one when it first hit the Web. The mere mention of this game is almost enough to kill our productivity all over again Weil maybe not but you get the picture

# **YAHOOI TEXT**

TWIST What was Jeff Green doing when he was supposed to be writing his stories for the past. two issues? Playing this silly word-matching game on Yahoo. And, from what we hear, getting beaten down pretty bad y at it by his 10-year-old daughter.



# G I TE VEN HE MOST OVERNATED/UNDERKATED VAPORWARE VERRATED DUKE NUKEM FOREVER 1D treams official follows date for the game—work is nes bean to REROJM Realms first-per on shooter/Prey as canceled in rder to shift the was to sport visuals which sounded like a big deal at the time. Maybe if 3D Realms had stuck with this one, if d actually have something good by how.

# Rewind

What should you play today? Names In red indicate Editors' Choice games

ISSUE	RATING
04 04	www.nn
03.104	****
03/04	***
04/04	<b>विकास</b>
06/04	***
03.04	pir pir
	04 04 03:04 03/04 04/04 06/04



The same of the sa	70	2000
<b>B</b> Seyond Divinity	08/04	***
Beyennel Sound & Evil	03/04	****
Black Hawk Down: Team Sabre	04/04	***
Black Mirror	02/04	水水
Slade and Sword	04/04	中分
Brood	07.04	right
Broken Sword 3	02/04	***
Celebrity Deathmatch	02/04	alta de la constanta de la con
Chaos Legion	08/04	W
Chrome	02/04	***
City of Heroes	08/04	SHARK!
Civilization III: Conquests	04/04	selektérés
Combat Mission: Afrika Korps	04/04	deletete
Conspiracies	05/04	* -
Contract J.A.C.K.	02/04	sininicin
Counter-Strike: Condition Zero	05/04	A de Arde
Crusader Kings	08/04	水水水で
Crystal Key 2: The Fac Boalm	08/04	takir
CSI: Crime Scene Investigation—Dark Motiv	08/04 /es	<del>/ri/</del>
Dark Age of Camelot: Trials of Atlantis	02/04	<del>kkk</del> i.

# Rewind 100

GAME	ISSUE	RATING
Doad Man's Hand	DR/04	WAT .
Dead to Rights	04/04	**
Desert Rats vs. Afrika Corps	07/04	水水水
Desert Storm III	02/04	<del>Add</del> n:
Dous Ex 2; Invisible War	03/04	<b>क्रेन्ट्रोडी</b> क प्रदेश
Dominions H	02/04	dalalatat
Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna	02/04	-tatatate
Empires: Dawn of the Modern Age	02/04	*****
Far Cry	06/04	AAAAAA
FIFA 2004	02/04	statated
Final Fantasy XI	02/04	大大大大
FireStarter	06/04	**
Gangland	06/04	***
Gothic II	02/04	<del>AAAA</del>
Hidden & Dangerous 2	02/04	shrkstrik.
Hitman: Contracts	08/04	statates is
Horizons: Empire of Istaria	05/04	<del>Volutelat</del>
Jack the Ripper	05/04	**
Jetfighter V	02/04	नेत



Joint Operations:     Typhoon Rising	09/04	<b>大大大大</b> 北
Judge Drodd: Drodd Versus Death	0//04	***
Koren: Forgotten Conflict	04/04	**
Kuma\War	09/04	riest .



@ Lineage II: The Chaotic Chronicle	08/04	<del>京市</del> * ^
Lock On: Modern Air Combat	03/04	<del>ákki</del> .
Lords of EverQuest	03/04	***
Lords of the Realm III	07/04	*

O

# 5 mods you can't live without

### 1. Half-Life: Counter-Strike

www.counter-strike.net/

Yeah, like this one's really a surprise. This team-based counterterrorism modification for Half-Life breathed new life into the mod community upon its release in 1999, and it quickly became one of the most popular online games of all time. Even now, five years later, the Counter-Strike community continues to thrive.



# 2. Battlefield 1942: **Desert Combat**

www.desertcombat.com/ Desert Combat, which has

become something of a modern equivaant to Counter-Strike in terms of popularity, transforms Battlefield 1942 into a tactical, modern-day Middle East conflict. The beta currently features a Desert Storm campaign, though additional campaigns are planned for future releases.



# 3. Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City

www.glaforums.com/

Ever wish you could take all the motorcycles, helicopters, and other cool rides of Grand Theft Auto: Vice City into the New York City-inspired setting of GTA3? With this extensive conversion, you can! Liberty City also features somewhat

tweaked vehicle physics, as well as a few new graphical effects for all the GTA fiends among you.



# 4. Unreal Tournament 2004: DeathBall

www.deathball.net/

This total conversion modtransforms UT2004 into an insane teambased deathsport, mixing rugby, football, handball, and a good helping of violence.

## 5. Tribes: Vengeance—Starslege 2845 www.mechnex.net/



Starsiege 2845 is an officially sponsored, total conversion mod for the upcoming Tribes Vengeance and thrusts players into the old-school mech-

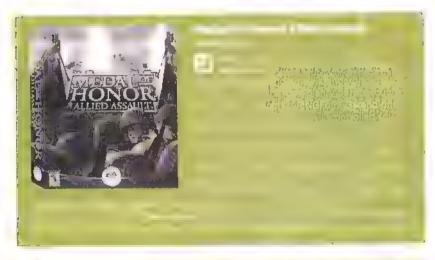
and vehicle-based environment of the original Starsiege

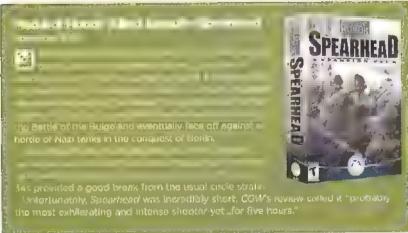


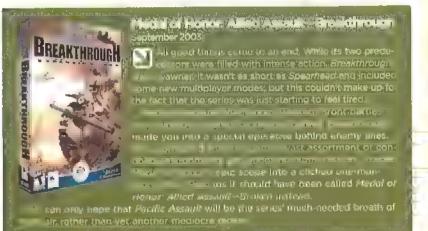


# A look at EA's Medal of Honor franchise

EA's Medal of Honor series of WWII shooters, originally developed by 2015, has spawned too many imitators to count. To complement this month's cover story, we present you with a short trip down memory lane and a look at Medal of Honor's undeniable influence on the FPS genre. Ol Luo







# Rewind100

GAME	ISSUE	RATING
LOTR: Return of the King	02/04	****
Magic: The Gathering— Battlegrounds	04/04	** -
Manhunt	07/04	icici
Midnight Nowhere	02/04	×
MVP Baseball 2004	06/04	****
Mysterious Journay II	03/04	siste
NASCAR Thunder 2004	05/04	水水水
NBA Live 2004	03/04	*****



ALC: LANCE OF	No.	of the same of the
O Need for Speed Underground	03/04	delebelet
Nomesis of the Roman Empire	07/04	icki
Neverwinter Nights: Hordes of the Underdark	03/04	stententente
Nosferatu	12 04	*1
Once Upon a Knight	02/04	***
One Must Fall: Battlegrounds	04/04	林林
Painkiller	02,04	scieleicits)
Patrician III	02/04	水水が
Pax Romana	03/04	***
Perimoter	09/04	ricks)
PlanetSide: Core Combat	02704	sirent
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	03/04	<del>kaaa</del>
Rallroad Tycoon 3	02/04	*****



-		
Q Rainbow Six 3: Athena Sword	06/04	destrate of
Files of Nations: Temper & Patricks	JZ 04	***
Sacred	J/:Q4	***
Second Weapons liver Harmanuty	03, 04	**1
SNAMES OF CHARS	04/04	***

# Rewind 100

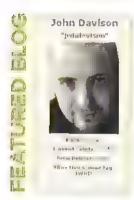
GAME



THE RESERVE STATES	- Allertan	Company of the last
D Shrek 2	09/04	skaleskal.
Silent Hill 3	03/04	## ·
Silent Storm	04/04	****
Singles: Fiirt Up Your Life	09/04	*
Splinter Cell Pandora Temerrow	06/04	weeks *
Squad Assault: Western Front	03/04	state of
Star Chamber	05/04	AAAAA
Star Fury	02/04	***
Stor Wars: Knights of the Old Republic	02/04	****
Syberia i)	05/04	<del>kaka</del>
Teonage Mutant Ninja Turtles	05/04	#d
Terminator 3: War of the Machines	04/04	##
The Hobbit	02/04	**
The Simpsons, Hit & Run	02/04	WANAN
Thief: Dendiy Shadows	09/04	skrakrakrak
Title Bout Championship Boxing	05/04	sinininin
Trainz 2004	04/04	***
True Crime: Streets of LA.	09/04	** **
Two Thrones	06/04	**
Unreal Tournament 2004	06/04	www.
Uru: Ages Beyond Myst	02/04	stratests of
Vogas Tycoon	04/04	deletele -
Victoria	03/04	stesteste -
War of the Ring	02/04	AAA -
War Times	08/04	चेत्रेट
Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrfor	07/04	Western n
Warlords Battlecry III	08/04	rkokalesi.
Wars & Warriors: Joan of Arc	05/04	Add.
Worms 3D	05/04	***
X2: The Threat	03/04	kkkl:
XIII	02/04	***
X-Plane 7.40	04/04	ricks
You Don't Know Jack— The Lost Gold	05/04	skok

Our favorite things of the moment at 1UP.com

Hey guys! Check out our ever-expanding gaming community at 1UP.com, where you can create your own journal, track your game collection, build a network of friends, and chat with other CGW readers. You can even join our club at cgwfans. IUP.com and let us know which clubs, blogs, and goofy pictures you'd like to see on this page each month!



## John Davison http://jwhdavison.IUP.com/

Contrary to what you might

trank, we aren't highlighting y log mist 'chuse he's

to led unal care for here

March Language

tinns adard ego a

is der' glimpio into thi

of ore wacey industry.

# CLUB OF THE MONTH

GTA: Nice City http://nicecity.1UP.com/club Do you ever wish those rufflans in GTA: Vice City would play nice? Well, in this club, they do. No blood and guts here-just ridiculously wholesome fun and bilariously doctored



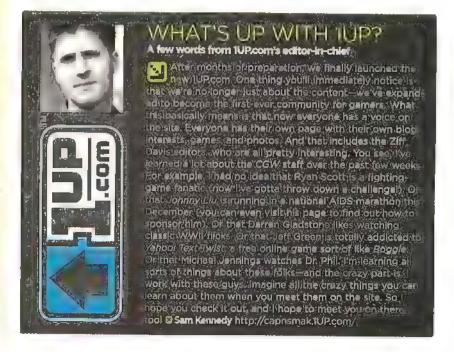


screenshots.

COLLECTS THESE STUPID THUMBS-UP PICTURES AND HE LISTENS TO BAD COUNTRY MUSIC, TOO. EFF GREEN-THE WEIRDO

"If a game is not from Richard Garriot, you can safely assume you will not resort to hair pulling and going bankrupt lust to play it."

-SERVANTES. 1UP.COM **FORUMS** 



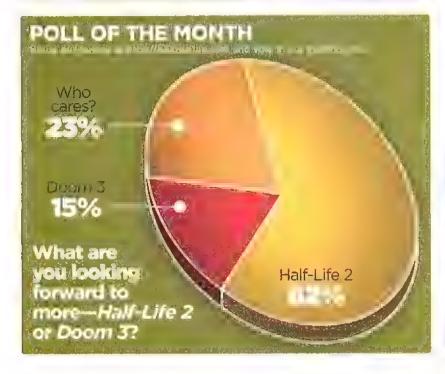


# CGW's readers speak up

Think you're clever? Got some good gaming suggestions? Just want to share your two cents? Send us your funny screenshots and and favorite PC gaming picks, and you might show up in the pages of a future Sound Off!



to mention, this secure about almost t mail your caption for the Ingles Flirt Un Your Life screenshipt to cow et ters a officiar's come with the subject line "Caption Contest," and you just mutit will some sort of fabrillous prize!







# Iomus. Bruce

Two gamers enter, one



he game is Joint Operations: Typhoon Rising. The place is Kubong Island Bridge on a server with about 60 players and a 30minute time limit. The players are Tom, a hardened veteran, and Bruce, who just Installed the game five minutes ago.

Tom: We're gonna need a bigger squad I've enlisted Erik Wolpaw, who will join us in a strictly advisory position. His job will be to keep Bruce from getting killed while I go about trying to win the game. I don't want to use the word "baby-sit," but-oops, I

Bruce: Tom Chick is a vain man, He's not just sat sfied with being the most respected videogame journalist in the world today and being about 1 million times better than me at those games that make you eventually murder people in real life, but I think he has invited first-person-shooter expert Erik Wolpaw to provide neutral, unbiased game commentary about how great a player Tom Is. Just like former U.S. Senate candidate Jack Ryan, Tom's just not satisfied unless other people are watching. In other words, while Erik is busy coming up with words to

describe Tom's amazing series of double-kills using nothing but flashbang grenades. ('Il be figuring out how to open Humvee doors

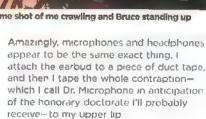
Erik: Even before the game starts. I face my first challenge Tom and Bruce insist that i need a microphone in order to participate. Like teenage girls, fancy dancer Bruce and actual teenage girl Tom can't go five minutes without talking to each

other But whatever-it'll be a good how wrinkly they're both getting in the bubble baths they're probably soaking in like Jonas Salk, I plug a pair of

physics, BECAUSE IT ACTUALLY WORKS,

opportunity to practice my military police radio codes while the two of them discuss The problem is, I don't own a microphone. In a panic, but also sort of like an inventor headphones into the microphone jack and talk into one of the earpieces. For once in my stinkin' life, the joke is on the laws of

If A rare late-game shot of me crawling and Bruce standing up appear to be the same exact thing, I and then I tape the whole contraptionwhich I call Dr. Microphone in anticipation



# Mr. Chick's wild ride

Tom: Using voice-chat software to coordinate our actions, I command everyone into a Puma helicopter that's winding up. Geryk takes a while to comply

Bruce: Trying to get into a vehicle in a NovaLogic game is like playing a fantasy role-playing game and having to know the Old English word for "healing potion" before you can drink one. Apparently, you

Just like former U.S. Senate candidate Jack Ryan, Tom's just not satisfied unless other people are watching.



C Erik Wolpaw Special Guest Stal Last month, Erik was laying in a pool of vomit. He will be hext month, too



ast month Tom blamed his loss in Warlords Battlecry III on a woman. Somewhere Steve McQueen weeps



Last month Last month Satar's nome gets awfully chilly as Bruch manages to beat Tome at a fantasy RTS





don't "get in" or "enter" a vehicle—you "attach" it. That sounds really military I spent 15 minutes going over every page of the manual including the ones with the backstory, trying to find out how to get in a truck. In the tutorial, they just tell you to "get in the truck." like you fought in Nam and instructively know every possible way of getting into trucks, even virtual ones.

**Tom:** notice that our pilot's name is new65532. He files us into the side of a mountain

Eruce: For this game, since loud explosions and juvenile tourits make me alternately scared and rritated. I turned the sound down and played the whole game to the background music of Stef's trance mix Just Believe in Trance. It's like "The Ride of the Valkyr es" in Apocalypse Now, except it makes me feel like dancing instead of killing you. It also makes me totally miss whatever it was that made us blow up. I assume it was my fault and apologize into the microphone

Erik: Dying gives me a chance to grab a medic kit, since it looks like healing Bruce and Tom will be a more lucrative undertaking than shooting at the UN peacekeepers on the other team, who will soon be killing Bruce and Tom.

Tom: By the time we respawn at the base, al the helicopters are gone, I grab a jeep and order Wolpaw and Geryk to hop in. We speed toward Bravo. Kubong sland is actually two islands; our rebell sland to the northeast, with capture points Charlie and Delta, and the enemy joint-ops island to the southwest, with capture points Alpha and Bravo. The islands are connected by a 100meter bridge, with a village on the beach at either end. By the time we finally reach the bridge, the other team is entrenched in the village on our side, preventing anyone from crossing. We dive out of the jeep and hit the jungle to lay down some suppressing fire from a position of cover

Erilc There's an article in the current issue of Weekly World News called "Scientists Revive the Stupid Part of Einstein's Brain." This reminds me of the time I kept having to revive Bruce just so that he could immediately stand straight up and get shot in the head again. I realize that I can't

expect Bruce to drive the rebel dune buggies around on two wheels, which is a talent I share with Hollywood stuntmen But for chrissakes, lying on your stomach and not moving is a talent Bruce needs to share only with babies. On the other hand, this helps my personal point total, so I can't get too mad. Back on the original hand, though Bruce's talent for getting shot isn't helping our indonesian separatist toam's anti-impenalist authentic narrative of resistance as hippies might say.

Tom: Wo paw's resurrecting us, but we're not making any progress. Our teammates are getting bogged down here as well. So when I get shot, I respawn back at the base, grab the Puma, land it on the beach, and order. Wo paw and Geryk inside. They man the guns, and I start orbiting Bravo. After we inflict some heavy casualties on the defenders, joint opsigets wist—a few. Stingers later, and we're just bodies falling out of a fireball.

Erik: A better name for Joint Operations Typhoon Rising would be Joint Operations Helicopter Ride because that's pretty much all I get to do anymore, since Tom insists on driving every vehicle we find until it gets hit by a missile, at which point they should call the game Joint Operations: Wait for Tom to Find a New Helicopter. While I'm pouting and absentmindedly firing my gun out the window, I accidentally kill someone on the ground—with a head shot! I figure that person couldn't have been moving so I send a message over the public channel that says. "LOL CAMPER!"

Tom: It's time for some heavier metal. The

BTR is an armored personnel carrier with a protected cannon turret on top. Each side on Kubong Island Bridge has one APC which some moron is usually driving out to sea rather than into battle. Luck ly, I find ours when we respawn after a thwarted gunship run. Wolpaw's in the turret, and Geryk is sitting in back, where we can keep him safely inside its armored shell. We pull up to the contested beach village, and Wolpaw lets rip with the cannon.

Bruce: To compensate for all the failures that Tom experienced in school when the cute girls wouldn't talk to him because he made the mistake of starting every conversation with a description of his favorite D&D character. Tom is now pretending that my actual life is actually at actual stake here and that I should stay in the back of this virtual, outdated Soviet-era armored personnel carrier OK, Tom

**Tom:** It looks like the village is cleared when two jeeps driven by other rebels go speeding past us. They start across the bridge, and I cautiously follow if we can get this BTR into a position to fire on Bravo, we can serve as a sort of armored spearhead for the rest of our team.

Bruce: Despite looking up all the neuroscience journal articles I could find using the National Institutes of Health database that included the keywords "Clancy Typhoon Sullivan gay marriage," I was never able to fully grasp the rules of this game. Maybe those experiments haven't been done yet. There were some weird symbols in the corner of the map that Tom said indicated the number of attackers and



☑ I was going to shoot this down until I realized it may be one of ours.



© On our way to crash into the side of a mountain.

defenders at each base. The weird thing was that there never seemed to be any defenders, because everyone was attacking the other side. Lasked Tom, "Does anyone ever defend in this game?" His response was, "If they're morons, no."

Erik: The most amazing thing about the two friendly jeeps is that neither one of them bursts through the side of our APC and runs over Bruce, who up until this point has shown a spooky knack for being driven into by every vehicle in Indonesia. Before I can mention our good fortune, both of the jeeps explode, I suggest we begin driving in a snake pattern, but Tom floors it and heads straight over a bridge toward a village, where we suspect the jeep killers are hiding. The nerve-wracking sound of bullets pinging off the APC grows louder as we tear through the village and into a narrow valley beyond it, "Tom," I yell, "this is the police. Those bullet noises are coming. FROM INSIDE THE TRUCK" Tom tells Bruce to stop firing his weapon.

Tom: There's Bravol I gun the engine, ramming into the side of the barr cade outside the bunker, where at least two AT-4 missiles just shot past us. I leap out of the BTR and let loose with a perfectiv aimed RPG shot right into the bunker's firing slit. Triple will I am John Frickin' Rambol There are no more defenders inside Bravo, and now we're taking control

Bruce: Having studied psychiatry, I can definitively state for the medical record that there is a significant probability that Tom actually believes he is John Rambo. I don't actually know who John Rambo Is. since I was too busy actually fighting the Cold War to sit at home and watch movies about it. Since Tom was rooting for the other side during that time, I can see how his "warrior misidentification disorder" was kind of predictable.

Tom: We're on the defensive now. We fan out inside the perimeter and pick off the joint-ops attackers as they arrive. Even Geryk is getting some kills now. We've still got 18 minutes left. If we can hold Brayo, we'll win the game. I tell Wolpaw and Geryk that we're staying put

Bruce: Tom's plan of winning by defense sounds like the Frenchiest strategy ever. I "attach" this 50-caliber machine gun and wait for something to happen. Kind of





@ Nobody really came anywhere near close enough for me to shoot at them, but I didn't mind.

Erik: Mostry out of morbid curiosity, I decide to follow Bruce. Pretty soon, we're separated from Tom. In fact, we're separated from overyone on our team, And everyone on the other team.

# Learning to crawl

Bruce: I realize that any time I stand up in this game, I die. Consequently, out of the mortal fear that when this game ends, I'm going to have like 20 times as many deaths as everyone else, I start crawling. Where I'm crawling to doesn't really matter. My plan is that some guy will think he is in a safe. place, leave his character stand no there while he uses the bathroom in real life, and I sneak up on him and kill him. Since I can't hit anything that is moving, this is the most likely scenario for me killing anything Except for the fishing boot I blew up with an RPG.

Erik: After his in tial reluctance to do anything other than stand ramnod straight up while people shot at him, Bruce now refuses to ever stand up or even knee. So I run about 50 feet ahead and jump up and down while Bruce painstakingly crawls over to me. We repeat this strategy for a while until we eventually find the fishing boat that Bruce then blows up. Since you can't revolutionize an omelet without terrorizing a few eggs, I figure, what the hell Maybe the fisherman is collaborating with the U.N. or, worse, the Zionist Entity, I'm sure the boat explosion sent a strong message to all potential collaborators. Though not at the time, since there wasn't a single person. within 10 miles of our position. Though I guess it wasn't a totally pointless act, since now I'm writing fan fiction about it.

Ton: What in the holy hell is going on here? Bravo is under heavy attack, and when I yell for Geryk and Wolpaw to shore up the left side, I see they've somehow managed to run all the way over the other side of the damn map. They're well past

Alpha, which is well defended in spite of a handful of guys on our team attacking it in vain. The action is here in Bravo, we're losing it with only seven minutes to go, and my men are AWOL!

Erik: Thanks to Internet scientists, even though Bruce and I are completely in the middle of nowhere, I can still hear Tom. complain. My new objective—code name Zeta-is to make Tom shut up. With that in mind, I start walking toward Bravo, I may have misjudged how isolated we were however, because after about 4 feet, I get shot. Bruce clearly sees me fail over dead. For a moment, I think that witnessing this violent tragedy will turn Bruce into a Southeast Asian Batman, Instead, Bruce calmity turns around and crawls back in the other direction. I respawn right near Tom.

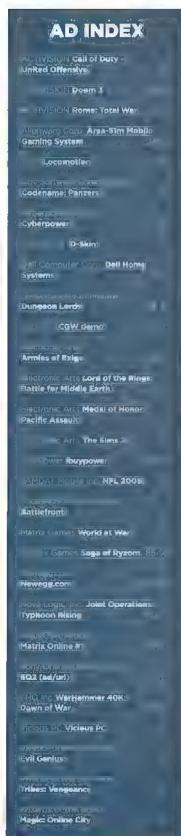
Tom: We're losing Brayo, It's not looking good. There are enough joint-ops troops there that we have to respawn way back on our own island and trek all the way back over the bridge. But the rebal-colored Brayo flag is falling at an alarming rate. While Wolpaw and I tear along the jungle roads in a jeep, I tell Bruce he's in a good position to hit the Alpha defenders from behind Maybe, just maybe, we can finish assaulting A pha before the joint-ops team retakes Bravo

Bruces I get to the end of the island before I notice that there is no more island Tom is impressed that I have managed to get all the way around to the far side of the Alpha base, like it is some kind of strategy or something. I agree with him and run back toward Alpha at full speed, since there is probably nobody around to think up a strategy this good or else they would have also done it. Just as I run into Alpha, the game ends, and we win. Circumstantia evidence strongly suggests I did it. I hit all the taunt keys in a row and put on a new trance CD. Oh, and I guit the game.

Final tally: Rebels win with 1 minute and 48 seconds left on the clock 69

# My new objective—code name Zeta—is to make Tom shut up.







# E Scorched Earth

# There Is No "I" in Team

Nor is there an "R," "X," "L," or 18 other letters

o, currently the biggest disappointment in my life-aside from every moment of every day-is that I couldn't get City of Heroes to run on my wife's notebook. No, I was not motivated by a sudden desire to draw the disbelieving, pitying stares of grande soy vanilla latte junkles by play-Ing the game at the local Wi-Fi Starbucks, Instead, I was spurred by an atypical fit of responsible parenting: I wanted to let the 8-year-old razortoothed homunculus my wife claims I sired play a game he desperately wants to play, but with me in the same game world, making sure no creep tries to become my son's new best friend. But just as big a motive was this: I just really wanted someone to play along with.

Hove City of Heroes, but in many ways it's almost a single player game. Oh, t've got a great big friends list, but they aren't actual friends, they're just people I grouped with once who weren't totally incompetent and are worth the effort of seeking out the next time I log on. They're less people than tools in a toolbox to help me get experience and new powers. COH's fast-paced gameplay pretty much prohibits any deeper bonding, and frankly, I'm very OK with that, I avoid EverQuest because constantly resting to recoup hit points forces me to learn more about some guy's I felong struggle for continence than I would ever want to know.

I realize there are guilds packed with people in MMOs and clans for every RTS and shopter ever released and to those people I say, "Huzzah! You've got something almost akin to friends!" But for all the touting of multiplayer in PC gaming as more games are released with only multiplayer play, the more i think PC gaming is becoming an isolated experience. We've been gibbing each other in Unreal Tournament and other shooters for years now, and while human players are more challenging than bots, let's face it they rejust stand-ins for the bots. We nover see who we're fragging never yowl in frustration in their faces never get to dance a pants-free leprechaun, g of victory in front of them. We might be playing each other, but we're experiencing it alone

The best gaming memories I have all involve other people. I've played in softball leagues forever, and those games are more vivid to me because to this day, I can relive them by taiking to my teammates. Who can I talk to about my stunning victory



# We never get to dance a pants-free leprechaun jig of victory.

online in UT? My wife? She might include me, sure, but then she'd want to talk about succulents and/or our kids, and I need that the way I need to skin the bottoms of my foet. Real-life play rules, if only because trash talking is never as sweet as when you can tell your opponent to his face that you've spent the last hour shaving his mother's back Bottom line. All games are better with your opponents or cohorts in the same room. When the teamplay patch for the original Half-Life was released, this office rang with cries of "Zombies to the bunker!" eight hours a day. For three years, CGW competed in life-or-death High Heat Baseball leagues in which we didn't just engage in hotseat play but also piled up behind the people playing just to watch Thank God we did, or we'd have missed seeing former tech galoot Dave Salvator nearly break three toes kicking a subwoofer after a particularly bitter defeat

Once upon a time, our electronic entertainment was played in a public space, in arcades where other people were watching or playing against us. Now we compete and cooperate for the most part, anony-

mously online. How do we gloat satisfactordy? How do we rehash a spirited contest? A follow-up e-mail? The forced immediacy of hotseat play in a room more socially active than the home office holding the family PC has given console games a multiplayer enjoyab lity advantage for years. But now, console games are moving online, many with the milistone of live chat. Personally, I rank enduring the uninspired taunting of a barely parented 13-year-old right up there with eyelid excision on my list of Things I Hope Never Happen to Me. so don't be looking for me on Xbox Live.

Is a console party game still a party game if the party is spread across the country and you're alone in your living room? No. and this is where the PC reclaims real multiplayer. This weekend, you and your buiddies get moving and hauf all your PCs to one place and hook up a dulck-and-dirty LAN Replace STFU and LOL with the kinds of truly cutting comments you wouldn't bother to type. Because every PC game can be a party game when you're having a I. AN party & Robert Coffey

robert coffey@2 ffday s.com

All I can do is show you the door.

You're the one that has to step through.

# JACK INTO THE MATRIX ONLINE.



The Matrix goes massively multi-player. An intelligent mission system. Ongoing input from the Wachowski brothers. Realistic and intense fighting in wire-fu and bullet-time. The chance to alter Matrix history forever. And a huge, ever-evolving world the likes of which have never been seen in MMOs. It's The Matrix Online and the rabbit hole just got deeper.

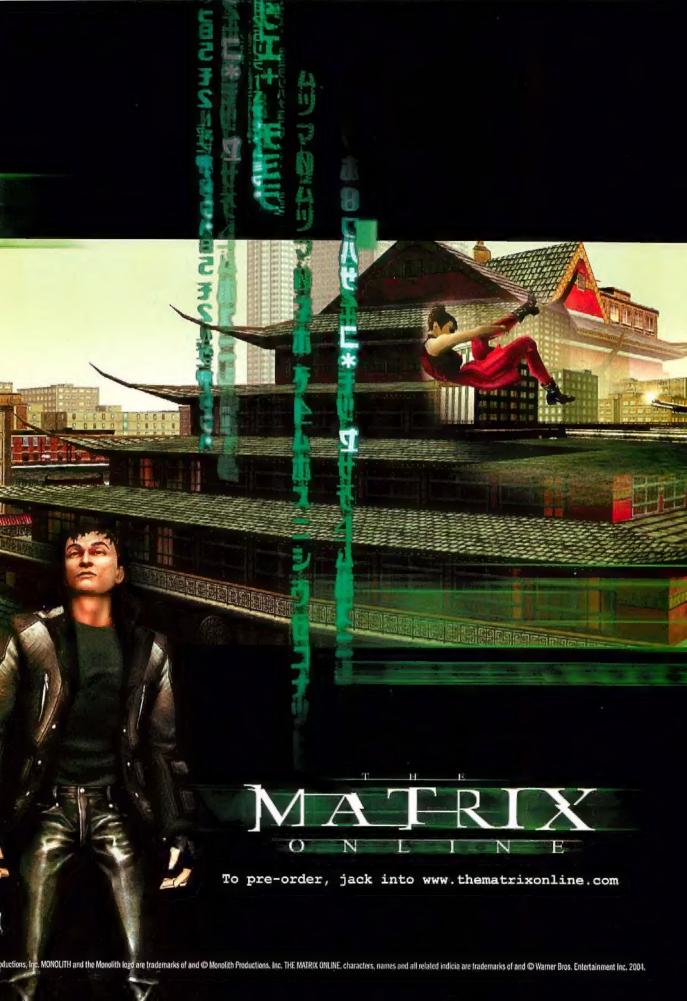




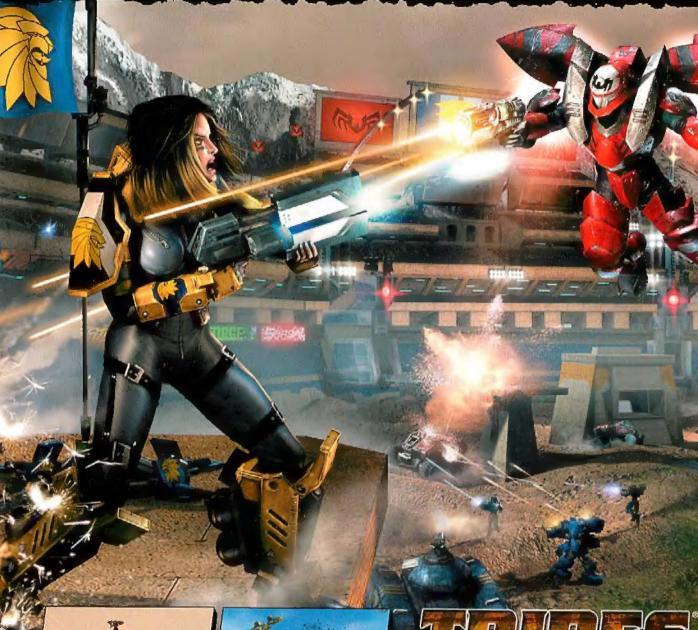








# VENGERNCE REIGNS FROM ABOVE.





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